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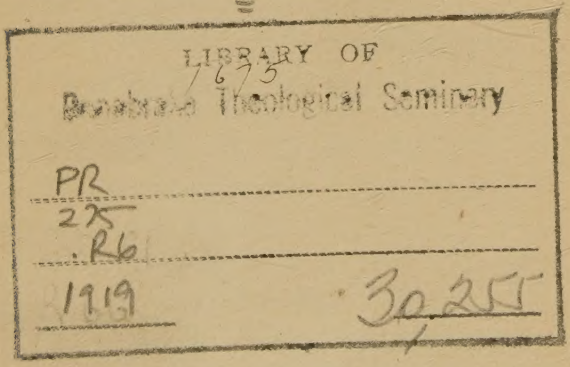
A STUDY IN PRE-REFORMATION RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

BY

GERTRUDE ROBINSON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FOREWORD

This little book has been written as an introduction to the study of the rich and varied Devotional Literature which was produced in the century and a half immediately preceding the Schism.

It in no wise pretends to be a history. All it aims to do is to describe the little groups into which the writers from 1400 to about 1540 seem to naturally divide themselves. It will generally be found that these groups centre round some one person or persons, who, so to say, set the tone to the rest; and it is more enlightening to gain a little intimate knowledge about these than to know many external facts about lesser people. That is why much space has been devoted to the one or two people in each group who, in the writer's opinion, had most influence on the work of their fellow-writers and on the life of their times.

Part II. consists wholly of excerpts from some of the mediæval mystical writers most popular amongst our forefathers.

1675

They have been taken from various manuscripts, mostly in the Bodleian Library, and such alterations have been made in the text as were necessary to render them easily intelligible to modern readers.

The manuscripts have not been collated, nor has any attempt been made at critical editing.

CONTENTS

PART I

CHAPTER I

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY 3

CHAPTER II

OF POPULAR DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE . . 11

(i) Mysteries and Miracle Plays . . . 12

(ii) The *Legenda Aurea* and *Liber Festivalis* . 15

(iii) Visions 16

(iv) The Allegory 17

Examples of Popular Devotional Literature

I. John Mirk—

(i) Extracts from the *Festival Book* . 27

(ii) Extracts from *Instructions to Parish Priests* 35

II. A Tale of True Contrition 38

PAGE

III. Popular Devotions for the Holy Mass—
(i) Extracts fron the *Lay Folks' Mass Book* 43
(ii) Extracts from Langford's *Meditations for Ghostly Exercise in Time of Mass* 48
(iii) Lydgate's *Merita Missæ* . . . 51
IV. A Meditation on the Passion in Verse . 52
V. A Prayer to our Ladye from the *Speculum Christiani* 55

CHAPTER III

Of Theologians 57
(i) William of Woodford 60
(ii) Thomas Waldensis 61
(iii) Biblical Studies 63
(iv) John Capgrave 65

CHAPTER IV

Of Mystics 68
(i) Richard of Hampole 72
(ii) Walter Hylton 74
(iii) Juliana of Norwich 76
(iv) Margery Kempe of Lynn 78

Examples of Mystical Literature

(i) Extracts from Misyn's Translation of Rolle's *Fire of Love* and *Mending of Life* 85

PAGE

(ii) Extracts from *The Booke of Margery Kempe* 89

(iii) Sayings of John Morton, Augustinian Canon of York, on "Temptation" . . 91

(iv) Extracts from Walter Hylton—

(*a*) The Five Degrees of Prayer . . 94

(*b*) Of Transforming the Soul into the Love of Christ 96

CHAPTER V

THE TIME OF CHANGE 100

(i) The Lady Margaret Beaufort . . . 106

(ii) Richard Whytford 107

(iii) Dean Colet 113

Extracts from Richard Whytford's Writings

(i) The Duties of the Master of a House . 123

(ii) Witchcraft 124

(iii) The Correction of Children . . . 126

(iv) The Practice of Confession . . . 129

(v) From *The Pype of Perfection*—

The Life of Perfection and The Religious Life. 132

The Contemplative Life 135

(vi) The Spiritual Glasse of the Soul . . 136

Extracts from the Works of Dean Colet

(i) Precepts of Living for the Boys of St Paul's School 141

PAGE

(ii) On the Church 144
(iii) On the Sacraments 144
(iv) The Dignity of the Rulers, and especially of the Pope 147
(v) Tradition 147
(vi) Of Priesthood 148

Prayers used by Sir Thomas More in the Tower 149

PART II

Containing Parts of Six Mystical Treatises

I. The Three Degrees of Prayer. Walter Hylton 153
II. Of Ghostly Love. Walter Hylton . . . 169
III. A Treatise on the Mixed Life. Walter Hylton 179
IV. Purgatory and Heaven. Richard Rolle . 199
From *A Treatise of Ghostly Battle*
V. The Revelation of St Katherine . . . 210
From *The Garden of Syon*
VI. The Treatise *De Passione Christi*. St Bonaventura 235

PART I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

"In this year" (1401), says Capgrave, "appeared a star they call a Comet betwixt the West and the North. It betokened, men said, the blood that should be spilt at Shrewsbury."

Perhaps to those who could read the signs of the times it might have betokened happenings still more disastrous.

We have wellnigh forgotten the "blood that was spilt at Shrewsbury," but the Eastern Schism, the fall of Constantinople, and the separation of England and a great part of Germany from the unity of Christendom were catastrophes whose consequences still remain.

The signs of the times are, however, often hard to read. The little cloud is overlooked, and we go on in careless security till the heaven above us is dark with clouds, and in the air is "the sound of abundance of rain."

Still, each epoch has its seers, though too often

they fare as did Cassandra in the days of Troy. A Katherine of Siena and a John Gerson might urge on Pope and Council the necessity for reform in the Church and discipline in the Curia; an Erasmus might beg that Luther and his heresy should be dealt with promptly and effectually. But Martin V. left the Curia very much as he found it; Eugenius IV. lost a great opportunity at the Council of Basle; and when Paul III. summoned the Council of Trent it was too late to avert the catastrophe. The storm had burst, and the floods were out.

There had been a long period of difficulty for the Church. From 1309, when Pope Clement V. found himself compelled to transfer the Papal Court to Avignon, till the Council of Constance, in 1414, she had been distracted by the presence of an Antipope; and at a time when sanctity and pre-eminent talent in the occupant of the Papal throne might have saved many a situation, these qualities were unusually conspicuous by their absence.

Great changes were taking place in the mind and life of Europe: she was restless and ill at ease, for she was entering on a new epoch of her life. And it was when the tide of spiritual life seemed at its lowest ebb, and discipline in the Church was weakest, that the dispersion of learned Greeks and

priceless manuscripts throughout Europe revealed to men's minds new systems of philosophy, and displayed to their imaginations new and alluring modes of life. Classical learning, though it had been much neglected, had never wholly died out; for from the time when the older Roman civilisation had been stamped out by the Gauls and Goths it had taken refuge in the monasteries. To the Benedictines belongs the honour of reserving, from the time of their foundation at Mount Cassino, a place for regular classical study; and the histories of Benedictine houses give short lists of Greek scholars, or rather of persons who knew Greek, in each century.

In the ninth century the German Benedictine Abbey of Fulden was famous for its literary studies; Pope Silvester II. was a notable classical scholar; and we hear of at least one school in Westphalia where Vergil, Horace, Sallust, and Statius were read.

Neither were Englishmen behind in scholastic attainments. The Venerable Bede was one of the ripest scholars of his time. Alcuin left York at the bidding of Charles the Great to found the school of Aachen. The great Grosseteste translated into Latin the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, assisted therein by a Greek priest of St Albans. John of Salisbury, though we do not hear of any

knowledge of Greek, had an extensive knowledge of Latin.

Before the end of the fourteenth century Manuel Chrysoloras had begun to lecture on Greek in Florence, and had taught in Pavia, Venice, and Rome. Even before the fall of Constantinople there were several learned Greeks in Italy, who were prepared to hail with joy the crowd of scholars that later on sought refuge in her cities.

It was with the establishment of the Florentine Academies, under the patronage of Lorenzo de' Medici, that the so-called Renaissance may be said to have begun. The Renaissance, or more correctly the Rise of Humanism, was the direct precursor of modern Liberalism. Beginning with the substitution of culture both of the body and the intellect for the practice of religion, it led first to the rejection of authority, then to the denial of revelation, and later on to the spurning of the restrictions of the moral law as a hindrance to the perfect development of man's nature. Is its latest phase the spectacle which is before us to-day? When we see a great people, which claims to be the very apostle of enlightenment and culture, standing as the champion of brute force against the liberties of mankind, owning no law but its own will, and claiming God Himself as its ally in deeds of rapine, bloodshed, and ruthless destruction at which

civilisation stands aghast; trampling down in its progress not only art and learning and the treasures of the past, but innocent and defenceless lives, nay, the very houses and priests of God if these stand in the path of its advance towards the complete realisation of its own desires. Is it too much to hope that this mass of flaming towns, this holocaust of human lives, may be the funeral pyre of that lying spirit which from the Medici palaces and gardens went forth to spread her poison over the civilised world, infecting sometimes even the Church herself, as the wax-moth infects the hive?

We, now that four centuries have passed away, can see the goal of movements and the result of tendencies of which in those days only a few wise men saw the trend. But it is evident that certain classes of mind set themselves against this new spirit, though they often eagerly accepted the new learning. There were, for instance, the Brethren of Common Life.

These remarkable people had probably inherited through their founder, Gerard Groote, some of the mysticism of Ruysbroeck. Their houses and schools were nurseries of devotion and learning. It is true that Erasmus, who was educated at Deventer, speaks scornfully of their manner of teaching the classics; but Erasmus is not wholly to be trusted when he speaks of religious houses.

They taught Greek as well as Latin, and their schools were famous.

At Herzogenbusch their pupils numbered 2000, and at Liége 1600.

They established printing-presses, and some of their houses, particularly that of Rostock, were famous for the beauty of their work. Many of their schools they continued until the Jesuit Fathers took them over and carried on the work they had begun. At Cologne their school and printing-press were in existence until the French occupation in 1802. Yet these brethren, some of them conspicuous scholars, had no sympathy with Humanism, and held on their course in spite of it and its later ally the Lutheran schism.

There were also the great Religious Orders, on whom Erasmus rails, and whose railing we can forgive when we remember that it was due to a raw and sensitive soul and a damaged digestion; they one and all, Augustinians, Benedictines, Carthusians, and Carmelites, not to speak of Franciscans and Dominicans, rejected Humanism. It is a fact worthy of note that these Orders in Italy alone—at a time when discipline was slackest and confusion was greatest and all the forces of evil seemed to have combined to sully the purity of the Spouse of Christ—produced a roll of saints whose names would have been an honour

to any age or country. Humanism, chiefly for political reasons, did not appear in France until the middle of the sixteenth century, and in Spain the strong rule of Ximenes, the great Archbishop of Toledo, gave no quarter to slackness, vice, or heresy.

But the new learning soon found its way to England, a Catholic England, which had cast off Wycliffe and all his works ; and the best of England's children accepted it, with a simplicity and earnestness that absorbed the good and rejected the evil. Schools and colleges were multiplied, churches were built, endowed, and adorned. Scholars from University and cloister hastened to Italy, and returned to communicate to others the knowledge they had gathered. Ignorance they feared, for ignorance was the mother of heresy and vice. Devotional literature, breviaries, missals, prayer-books and manuals, treatises of mystical and practical theology and books of instruction poured forth in an abundance which still could not meet the demand, from the printing-presses that were set up in houses, colleges, and cloisters. For the new learning placed no barrier between old and new. Among the first books which issued from the printing-presses were the old treasures ; and it was the men who sympathised most with the new who were most anxious that it should be a worthy

handmaid to the old. It was the same Richard Whytford who had companied with Erasmus who as a Brigittine monk wrote the *Pype of Perfection.* It was the Greek scholar Grocyn who wrote a treatise against Wycliffe, and William Lily who wrote a hymn in praise of our Lady. Nor must we forget that the same Thomas More who wrote *Utopia* wrote also "a Dialogue wherein he treateth of . . . the veneration and worship of images and reliques, praying to saints and going on pilgrimage. With many other things touching the pestilent sect of Luther and Tyndale, by the one begotten in Saxony and by the other laboured to be brought into England."

What the new learning did for England was wholly good: it gave an impetus to learning, it stimulated zeal and energy, and it increased the piety of the devout. England, at least, it had no hand in separating from the unity of Christendom. It was not until the charms of learning waxed dim before those of Anne Bulleyn that the danger began. It was not until the calm temper of the scholar had yielded to the madness of the bully and the tyrant, that the king, and the men who followed the king, began their attack on what had once stood to them, and still stood to the majority of Englishmen, for all that was best and holiest in the life of the nation.

CHAPTER II

OF POPULAR DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE

BEFORE the concentration of population into large towns, the English village was the nucleus of the national life.

The centre of the village was the church, and the priest was, as his title indicates, the chief person[1] of the parish. In many places the church was the proud possession of every villager, for had not he or his fathers helped to build and adorn it? Every stone had been laid by zealous hands, and the walls had risen beneath the gaze of watchful eyes. Masonry and sculpture, carved wood and wrought iron, were the work of village craftsmen. Every stitch of embroidery, every piece of needlework, was done by the fingers of those whose eyes would see it used. Sunday by Sunday the villagers offered the holy Bread for the Sunday Mass, and the farmers brought the first-fruits of their harvest to the Altar of God on Hlaf-mass Day.[2]

[1] Person = parson.

[2] Lammas or Loaf-mass Day: Aug. 1st.

Mysteries and Miracle Plays

As the great Feasts came round, the events they commemorated were shown by little companies of village players, who, though ignorant no doubt of Eastern custom and Bible phraseology, knew how to reach the hearts of their audience.

At Christmas and Epiphany, a hall of the great house or of the abbey, or the parish hall, where village "ales" were held, was lined with villagers. In the midst would be seen the Mother and the Babe in the stable, the adoring Shepherds, and the kneeling Sages. Doubtless many a mother's heart leapt in sympathy with that other Mother, who spoke to her Babe such words as mothers use all the world over. Would not any husband, who knew hard times, understand the feelings of that other husband, who sought in a strange and crowded village to procure such comforts as might be had, for the tender Maid he guarded? The shepherds and herdsmen, who watched the adoration of the Eastern shepherds, had known what it was to leave, perhaps at risk of loss, their folds and their cattle for the Midnight Mass. Even the Three Kings offered their gifts in words which the village-folk themselves might have used. The speeches might be tedious, the *mise en scène* altogether wrong, the acting crude and grotesque,

but both scene and actors were alive. So at Passion-tide and Easter the story of the Passion and Resurrection was told and its scenes enacted on the village green. The Lord and His Mother, His disciples and the holy women, His judges and executioners, His revilers and mourners, were all there, before their eyes. They might look upon a Mater Dolorosa, upon angel guards, upon an empty tomb, upon a Risen Lord. And as with these great mysteries, so with the lesser scenes of our Lord's life: all that He did and said and suffered was made plain to the simplest mind in these mystery plays. They saw the Boy in the Temple, the Workman at the carpenter's bench, the Preacher in the villages: and He spoke and acted as they themselves spoke and acted.

The village mysteries [1] were the precursors of those numerous miracle plays which took so large a part in the social and religious life of England, and about which so much has been said and written. From the villages they found their way to the towns. Every craftsmen's guild made it a part of its rule and constitution to prepare and present,

[1] Perhaps the mystery both in town and village grew out of the Apocryphal Gospels and the plays founded on them. They were acted first in the church, then before the church, then on the green or in the market-place, secularised and expanded. Then the "Quem quaeritis" of Christmas and Easter extended in both directions till the whole cycle was formed.

at great festivals and on special occasions, sometimes one, sometimes a whole series of plays. At Winchester, for instance, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, in 1467, five plays were acted by the different crafts; at Reading, the churchwardens' accounts mention the play of the Three Kings being acted at Whitsuntide, the Passion on Palm Sunday, and the Resurrection at Easter. At Dublin, in the fifteenth century, there was produced the whole Corpus Christi cycle of fourteen plays; at Canterbury, in 1420, the craftsmen of the city acted the same cycle; and at Wakefield the different guilds produced the Townley cycle of thirty-two plays. These play-cycles were not confined to the life of our Lord; they included a great deal of Old Testament history. In one Norfolk town the grocers' guild acted the Creation and Fall. The story of Abraham and Isaac was a very common subject. At Norwich the craftsmen produced Noah's Ark! Nor were Scripture stories alone the subject-matter of these plays. Lives of the saints were often represented, with many pious fancies woven into the web of truth, for the saints were the dear and familiar friends of our English forefathers.

The "Legenda Aurea" and the "Liber Festivalis"

Not only plays but books innumerable were written about the saints. There are the many English versions of the *Legenda Aurea*, for instance, and the *Nova Legenda Angliæ*. On this latter is founded a very famous fifteenth-century production, the *Liber Festivalis* or *Festival Book* of John Mirk, prior of the Augustinian canons of Lilleshall in Shropshire, which was published first by Caxton in 1483, and again by Wynkyn de Worde in 1503. It has been edited for the Early English Text Society, and its editor says: "It may be considered as the origin or substratum of the English Common Prayer Book." If so, the English Common Prayer Book is by no means true to its origin. The *Festival Book* contains sermons for all Sundays and Holy Days, as well as prayers and instructions, and it abounds in legends of the saints and stories of supernatural happenings, some exceedingly beautiful, others grotesque to our modern ears. There is the story of the priest, for instance, who lost the Host while carrying it to a sick woman. Overwhelmed with grief at his sin, he cut willow wands in the wood, and scourged himself therewith till the blood "ran adown his sides." His penance was accepted, for as he "put

on his clothes again," he saw a pillar of light rising from the earth to the heaven. Joyfully he hastened to the spot, to find the Host he had lost lying there on the ground, with all the dumb creatures kneeling to worship before it, save one black horse, who transpired to be a fiend out of hell.

Many people know of the story of the knight who forgave his enemy, from Burne-Jones's picture.[1]

Visions

Such tales as these were no doubt culled from a wide field of legend and vision. The recluse in his cell saw visions, and the monk at his prayers, and they were not denied to their brethren in the world. Not only the Monk of Evesham saw how souls fared in the world to come: we hear of one William Staunton, "a man born in the Bissopryche of Dereham," who "by Goddes grace entered into the Purgatory of St Patrick in Ireland . . . on the Friday next after holyrode day in harvest." Many strange things befell him there, and many strange sights he saw. "There I met," he says, "a sister of mine that was dead long before in a pestilence tyme, and another man, whom I knew my sister loved well, while they lived in this world." This sister made a complaint against him to St John of

[1] See p. 27.

Bridlington, who was acting as his cicerone in Purgatory, that her brother "had sinned in Holy Church against God"—"For this man standing here, loved me and I loved him, and either of us would have had other in the law of God, as Holy Church teacheth, and should have gotten of me four souls to God; and my brother letted us to go together." Then St John said: "Why didst thou this trespass against God and thine own soul? For I tell thee, there is no man that letteth a man or a woman go together, in the bands of God, though the man be a shepherd and all his ancestors, and the woman be come of kings or emperors; or if the man be come of never so high kin and the woman never so low kin; if they love one another, he sinneth in Holy Church against God and His Christendom."

The Allegory

The Allegory, that became so famous later on, belongs, in England, to a time of greater mental complexity and subjectivity. But allegorical poems were being written in France, and in the fifteenth century we find, amongst others, Alexander Berkeley, John Lydgate, and Henry Watson all translating French allegories into English.

Alexander Berkeley translated into English verse *The Great Shippe of Fools of this World*, which Henry Watson, at the command of Lady

Margaret Beaufort, translated into prose. He is quite as famous, perhaps more so, for his eclogues, especially for the one which he wrote in memory of his friend, Bishop Alcock of Ely. Bishop Alcock was himself a poet; he wrote a commentary in verse on the Psalms, after the fashion of his day. He is known also as the author of a treatise called *Mons Perfectionis*, which became sufficiently popular to be translated into English as *The Hylle of Perfection*.

It was this same Bishop Alcock who founded Jesus College, Cambridge, and who, according to the Ely Register, preached on the first Sunday of Lent, in the year 1488, a sermon in St Mary's Church, Cambridge, which began "at 1 of the clock and ended after the third hour!"

"The Gentle Cock," Berkeley calls his poem, with a pun on the name, which he carries out all through it.

"Yes, since his dayes, a Cock was in the Fen;
I know his voyce among a thousand men.
He taught, he preached, he mended every wrong;
But, Coridon, Alas! no good thing bideth long.
He All was a Cock, he wakened us from sleep,
And while we slumbred, he did our foldes keep.

. . . . . .

The pretie palace by him made in the Fen,
The maides, widows, the wives and all men,
With deadly dolour were pearsëd to the hearte,
When deathe constrained this shepherd to departe.

Corne, grass and fieldës mourned for wo and payne,
For oft his Prayer for them obtainëd rayne ;
The pleasant Floures for wo faded eche one ;
The okes, elmës and every sort of dere,
Shronke under shadowes, abating all their chere.
The mighty walles of Ely Monastery,
The stones rockes and towres semblaby,
The marble pillers and images eche one,
Swete all for sorrow, when this Cock was gone."

The *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, written by De Guilleville in French, and translated into English by John Lydgate, has sometimes been thought to be the origin of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is not improbable, though there are many points of difference. Both are alike, in that they have for their subject the story of the journey of a soul on its way through this world to a better. They differ, perforce, in the religious outlook of the traveller. Christian was a Protestant of Bunyan's day, while De Guilleville's Pilgrim, from the beginning to the end of his journey, was a son of Holy Church, who had set out, not impelled like Christian by the fear of judgment, but enticed by the heavenly vision he had seen. The burden of Christian's sins clung to him for a long way on his journey, but the Pilgrim started free :

" What nedyth it to washe me,
Or bathe when it is no neede ;
For I am clene washëd indeed
From all filth and uncleneness."

Lydgate was a follower of Chaucer and one of the most prolific versifiers of his time, or indeed of any other. Though a monk of the Benedictine Abbey of Bury, his religious poems belong almost entirely to his later life; among them is a long life of our Lady of very unequal merit. Lydgate wrote the *Merita Missæ*, a method of hearing Mass :—

> "For the lewd who cannot read,
> But the Paternoster and the Creed,"

and he is the reputed author of the Corpus Christi play in the Coventry series.

Among his so-called secular poems, we may note the *Destruction of Thebes* and a translation of the French romance the *Historia Trojana*. However strange it may seem to us that a monk should use his talent in dealing with such themes, it was not out of accord with the feeling of an age when there was no hard-and-fast line between things sacred and secular, and when all literature was, moreover, under the patronage of the Church.

In the forefront of tales of chivalry and romance there are dedicatory verses to our Lady, and it is rare to find a literary work of any kind begun without a prayer for Divine help and acceptance.

As a single instance we may quote the verses prefixed to the quaint scientific work, *De Proprie-*

tatibus Rerum, attributed to Bartolomaeus Anglicus, an English minorite :[1]

" Crosse was made all of red,
In the beginning of my boke,
That is called God me spede.
In the first lesson that I toke,
Then I learned " A " and " B,"
And other letters by their names,
But always " God spede me,"
Thought me nedeful in all games.
If I played in other medes,
I prayed helpe in all my dedes
Of him that dyed upon the cross.
Now dyverse playës in his name,
I shall let pass forth and fare,
And aventure to play a long game.
Also I shall spare
Vuodes medes and feldes,
Place that I have playëd inne,
And in his name that all things weldes,
This game I shall beginne,
And pray help, counseyle and rede
To me that he would sende,
And this game rule and lede,
And bringe it to a good ende."

But of purely devotional literature there was no lack. Apart from the treatises that saints, mystics, and recluses wrote for their brethren in the world who aimed at perfection, there are many manuals and books of instruction in religion for ordinary

[1] This book was translated into English by John Trevisa. Caxton learnt his art by helping to print one of the early editions.

folk—the *Prymer*, for instance, and the *Babees' Book* (a book of instruction in manners, morals, and religion for children), not to mention such popular works as *Pars Oculi* and *Dives et Pauper*.

Neither must we forget the many books written to help the laity in assisting at Holy Mass. Of these the *Lay-folk's Mass-book*, in its several translations and variations, is perhaps the best known. Strictly speaking, it belongs to a much earlier period, for it was written in Norman French in the twelfth century, by Dan Jeremy, Archdeacon of Cleveland. It was, however, translated into English very early, and was constantly used right up to the change of religion. In the library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, there is a copy which was made in the fifteenth century for the Cistercian Abbey of Rievaulx. Its title runs:—*Liber Beatae Mariae de Rievalle ex procuratione Domini Willelmi Spenser Abbatis ejusdem*; and it begins:—

> "The worthiest thing, the most of goodness,
> In all the world that is the Mass.
> In all the books of holy Kirk,
> That holy men, that time can work,
> The Mass is praised many-fold."

Another Mass book of the time is called *Meditations for Ghostly Exercise in time of Mass*. It is a method of hearing Mass, which connects the details of the ceremonial with the actions of the Passion, and is

a beautiful little treatise ; but all we know of its writer is that he bids us " Help with an Ave, in honour of our Blessed Lady, B. Langford, Preiste." John Mirk of the *Liber Festivalis* also wrote of the Mass, in his *Instructions to Parish Priests*, which he says he translated from the Latin called *Pars Oculi*. He seems to mean the *Pupilla Oculi* of William of Pagula, the Vicar of Winkfield near Windsor, a famous canonist of his time.

The *Instructions to Parish Priests* has been edited by the Early English Text Society, and the editor, in his preface, says :—" A relic of this sort, fished up from the forgotten past, is very useful to us as a help towards understanding the life our forefathers lived. To many it will seem strange that these directions, written without the least thought of hostile criticism, when there was no danger in plain speaking and no inducement to hide or soften down, should be so free from superstition." How surprised the good Prior of Lilleshall would be if he could read this gentle little remark of his sympathetic editor ! " And what in good sooth had I to hide or soften down ? " he would surely say. Certainly no hiding or softening-down process is apparent in his very plain-spoken English rhymes, which, though they were written for parish priests, could be read by any member of their flocks. They contain instructions on the administration of all

the Sacraments; very full directions as to the hearing of confessions and the shriving of penitents; as well as a complete compendium of the instruction to be given to parishioners as to their lives and conversations as well as to their religious belief. A parish priest who faithfully carried out these "Instructions" would evidently be a very busy man indeed.

Popular Devotional Literature

JOHN MIRK

I. EXTRACTS FROM THE "FESTIVAL BOOK"

1. The Good Friday Narrative
   (The Knight that forgave his Enemy)
2. The Easter Day Narrative
3. The Bedes for Sunday

II. EXTRACTS FROM "INSTRUCTIONS TO PARISH PRIESTS"

1. On Shrift
2. On the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar

III. A TALE OF TRUE CONTRITION
By Richard the Hermit

GOOD FRIDAY

THERE was a knight sometime that was a great lord, and he had a worthy man unto his son. And so it happened that another knight and this man fell at debate, and so this knight slew him. Wherefore the father of this man that was dead gathered a great multitude of people, and pursued that other knight wheresoever he went, to have slain him, night and day, so that he might have no rest, but ever did flee for fear of his life. Then it happened, on a Good Friday, this knight saw all the Christian people go to the Church. And he bethought him that Christ died on that day on the Cross for all mankind, and put him only on the Mercy of Almighty God, and went to the Church with other people to serve God. And when he was in this Church, anon, this other knight had word, and came with much people into the Church with his sword drawn in his hand for to slay him. And when the other knight saw that and wist well that he had trespassed to him, he fell flat on the ground with his arms spread abroad as our Lord

Jesus Christ spread abroad His Arms on the Cross and said, "For the Love that this day spread His Arms on the Cross and suffered Passion and died for thee and me and all mankind have thou mercy on me and forgive me thy son's death."

Then this knight thought it would be too horrible a thing to smite him, while he lay so and cried him mercy so meekly. And anon, he put up his sword and said to him: "Now for His Love that this day died on the Cross for thee and me and all mankind I forgive thee." And took him up and kissed him and anon went to do worship, kneeling to that Cross. And when the knight would have kissed the Feet of the Cross, the Image loosed His Arm from the Cross, and clasped the knight about the neck, and kissed him and spake then that all the people heard, "I forgive thee as thou hast forgiven for love of Me."

EASTER DAY

There was some time a holy Bishop, that prayed often busily to God that he might have Grace to see and know which were worthy to receive the Holy Sacrament, and come to God's Board. (Various people came, some with faces dropping blood, some with faces black.) Then, among all, other two common women came and their faces shone as bright as the sun. Then had the Bishop

great marvel of the sight and prayed to God to give him revelation what all this betokened.

Then came to him an angel and said: . . . " Those two women that shone so bright and passing all others, they were great sinners and were sore afraid when they came to Church, and took a great repentance in their hearts, and they made a vow to God praying Him heartily to take no vengeance on their sins and they would forsake their sins and never do amiss more. Wherefore God, of His great Mercy, hath forgiven them their trespasses, and all their sins, and the sorrow of their hearts hath so washed their souls, that they shine brighter than all others."

Then the Angel went his way, and the Bishop kneeled down and thanked God for His revelation.

THE BEDES ON THE SONDAYE

Ye shale knele downe on your knees and lyfte up your hertes, makinge your prayers unto almighty God.

For the good state and peas of al holy chirche, that God mayntayn save and kepe it.

For our holy fader the Pope with al his true colege of cardynallis that God in his mercy hem mayntayne and kepe in the righte byleve and it hold and increase, and alle mysbyleve and heresye he lesse and destroye.

Also ye shall pray for the holy londe and for the holy crosse that Jhesu Christ dyed on, for the redempcyon of mannys soule, that it may come into the power of cristen men the more to be honoured for our prayers.

Also ye shal praye for all archebysshoppis and bysshoppis. And in especial for the archebisshop of Caunterbery our metropolitain, and for the bysshop of N. our dyocysan, that God of his mercy gyve to them grace so to governe and rule holy chirche that it may be to the honour and worship of hym and salvacon of our soules.

Ye shal also pray for abbottis, pryours, monkes, chanons freres and for all men and wymmen of relygyon in what order estate or degree that they stonde in fro the hyghyest estate unto the lowest degree. Ye shall also praye for all them that have charge and cure of cristen mennys soulis, alle curatis, persones, vycaryes, priestes and clerkis. And in especyall for the persone and curate of this chirche and for alle the preestes and mynysters that serve therin or have served therin. And for alle theym that have taken any order, that God give them grace to well observe and kepe it to the honour and helthe of theyr soules.

Ye shal also pray for the unyte and peas of alle cristen reames and in especyall for the good state and peas and tranquilyte of this reame of Englond :

for our lyege Lorde the kynge that God for his grate mercye sende hem grace to governe and rule this reame that God be pleased and worshipped and to the profyte and salvacyon of this londe.

Also ye shal pray for our lyege lady the quene, my lord the prynce, and all the whole progeny of them. For all dukes, knyghtes and squires and all other lords of the kynges counsele which have any rule and gouvernance in this londe, that God give them grace so to counsel rule and governe that God be pleased, the londe defended and to the profyte and salvacyon of alle the reame.

Also ye shal praye for the peas bothe on londe and on the water that God grant love and charyte among all cristen people.

Also ye shal praye for alle our parysshens where they be on londe or on water, that God save them from all manner of peryls, and for all the goodmen of this parysshe, for their wyves, childeren and meyne that God them mayntene, save and kepe.

Ye shal also pray for all true tythers that God multiplye theyr goods and encrease. For all true telyers that labour for our sustenance that telye the erthe.

And also for all the graynes and fruites yt ben sown or doon on the erthe or shall be done, that God sende such wederynge yt they maye growe

encrease and multeplye to the helpe and profyte of all mankynde. Ye shal pray for all true shypmen and marchauntes where that they be on londe or on water, that God kepe them from alle peryllys and brynge them home in safty with their goodes, shyppes and marchaundyse to the helpe comforte and profyte of this reame. Ye shall also pray for them that fynde any lyghte in this chirche or give any bequeste, booke, belle, chalice or vestymente, surplyce, aulterclothe or towel, londes, rentes, lampe or light or any other adornement whereby goddis servyce is the better servyd, susteyned and mayntened, in redynge and syngynge. And for all theym that thereto have counseyled yt God rewarde and gelde it theym atte their most nede. Also ye shall pray for alle true pylgryms and palmers that have taken their way to Rome, to Jherusalem to Saynte Katherines or to Saynte James, or to any other place, that God of his grace give them tyme and space well for to goo and to come to the profyghte of their lives and soules.

Ye shall also pray for alle theym that ben syke or deseased of this parysshe that God send to them helthe the rather for our prayers; for all the wymmen that ben in our lady bondis and with childe in this parisshe or in ony other, that God sende to them fayr delyveraunce, to theyr childeren

right shape, name and cristendome and to the moders purifycacion.

And for all theym that wolde be here and may not, for sykenes or traveyle or any other leefull occupation that they may have part of alle the good deedes that shal be doon in this place or in any other. Also ye shal pray for alle them that ben in goode lyfe that God them holde long therein and for theym yt ben in dette or dedely synne yt Jesu crist bryng them out the rather for oure prayers.

Also ye shall pray for hym or her that this day gaaf the holy brede and for hym that first began and longeste holdeth on that God reward it hym at the day of dome, and for alle theym that doe or saye you goode, yt God gelde it them at theyr neede, and for theym that other wolde that Jhesu Christ amend theym. For all these and alle cristen men and wymmen ye shal saye a Pater Noster and Ave.

Ferdermore ye shal pray for alle cristen soules, for archbysshoppis and bysshopys soules, in especyal for al that have been byssoppys of this dyosyce.

And for alle curates presones and vycaryes soules. And in especyall for theym that have ben curates of this chirche. And for alle soulis that have served in this chirche.

Also ye shall praye for the soulis of all cristen

kynges and queens and in especyall for the soulis of theym that have ben kynges and queens of this reame of England. And for alle those soules yt to this chirche have gyven book belle chalyce or vestement or any other thynge by the whiche the service of God is better done and holy chirche worshipped.

Ye shall also pray for your faders soulis, for your moders soules for yr godfaders soulis for your godmoders soules for yr brethren and sustern soules and for your frendes soules.

And for alle the soules that we ben bounde to praye for.

And for the soules that ben in the paynes of purgatory, there abydyng the mercy of almyghty God.

And in especyall for theym that have most nede and leest helpe that God for his endlesse mercy lesse and mynysshe theyr peynes by the moyen of our prayers and bryng theym to his everlasting blysse in heven.

And for alle cristen soules ye shal devoutly say a Pater Noster and Ave and De Profundis.

INSTRUCTION FOR PARISH PRIESTS

On Shrift

Now I pray ye take good heed,
For this thou must needs know.
Of Shrift and Penance I will thee tell,
And a whyle hereon dwell.
But much more thou must witten [1]
Than thou findest herein written.
And when thee faileth here to wyt
Pray to God to send thee it. . . .

Therefore by good discretion,
Thou must, in confession,
Join penance both hard and light
As thou hereafter learn might.

. . . . .

Do ryght then as I thee ken
To thine own pareschene,
Teach him to kneel down on his knee
Poor or rich whether he be ;
Then over thine eyes pull thine hood
And hear his shrift with mild mood. . . .

[1] Know how to do.

(But when a woman comes he is " to sit as still as a stone," and neither to " spit nor cough.")
Nor wrynge thou not with thy shanks [1]
Lest she suppose thou make that fare [2]
For loathing what thou hearest there. . . .

And when she stinteth, and sayeth no more :
If thou seest she needeth lore ;
Then speak to her on this wise :
And say, " Take thou good avise
And what manner of thing thou art guilty of
Tell me boldly and make no scoff,
Tell me thy sin I thee pray
And spare thee not by no way ;
Fear thee not for no shame
Peradventure I have done the same." . . .

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

And when they hear the belle ring,
To that holy Sacering.
Teach them kneel down, both young and old,
And both their handës up to hold.
And say then in this mannere
Fair and softly without bere [3]
" Jesu Lord, welcome Thou be
In form of bread as I see Thee.
Jesu, for Thy Holy Name,
Shield me to-day from sin and shame.

[1] Do not fidget with thy feet. [2] To do. [3] Noise.

Shrift and housel Thou grant me both,
Ere that I shall hence go,
And true contrition for my sin,
That I, Lord, never die therein :
And as Thou wert of a mayden born,
Suffer me not to be forlorn.
But when that I shall hence wend
Grant me bliss withouten end. . . .

Teach thou them with good intent
To believe, in that Sacrament,
That they receive in form of Bread
It is God's Body that suffered dead
Upon the Holy Rood Tree
To buy our sins and make us free.
Teach them this, nevertheless,
That in the chalice is but wine and water
That they receiveth for to drink
After that holy houseling. . . . .

No man in Church shall scholl [1]
Nor lean to pillar or to wall
But fair on knees they shall them set
Kneeling down upon the floor flette [2]
And pray to God with heart meek
To give them mercy and grace eke.

[1] Loll. [2] Flette=flat.

A TALE OF TRUE CONTRITION

By Richard the Hermit

Also he rehearsed another tale of true contrition that the same clerk says.

He tells that a scholar at Paris had done full many sins, which he had shame to shrive himself of. At last, great sorrow of heart overcame his shame, and when he was ready to shrive him to the Prior of the Abbey of St Victor, so much contrition was in his heart, sighing in his head, sobbing in his throat, that he could not bring a word forth. Then the Prior said to him "Go and write thy sins." He did so, and came again to the Prior, and gave him what was written, since he could not shrive himself with mouth. The Prior saw that the sins were so great, that he took leave of the scholar to show what was written to the Abbot.

But when the Abbot took the paper to read thereon, behold there was nothing!

Then he said to the Prior: "What meaneth this? There is no writing hereon."

And the Prior said: "There was writing; for I myself read it."

Then the Abbot knew that God had forgiven the scholar his sins for his great contrition thereat. And so he said to the Prior; and the Prior told the scholar, who with great joy thanked God.

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Popular Devotions for the Holy Mass

I. EXTRACTS FROM THE "LAY FOLKS' MASS BOOK"

II. LANGFORD'S "MEDITATIONS FOR GHOSTLY EXERCISE IN TIME OF MASS"

III. LYDGATE:

"MERITA MISSÆ"

A MEDITATION ON THE PASSION IN VERSE

A PRAYER TO OUR LADYE, FROM THE "SPECULUM CHRISTIANI"

A Prayer after the Confiteor, while the Priest finds his Place

God for Thy Goodness,
At the beginning of this Mass
Grant all that it shall hear
Of their sins that they be clear.
Lord save the priest that it shall say
From temptation this ilk day ;
That he be clean of will and thought,
That the ill wild spirit (an)noy him not,
That he fulfil this Sacrament
With clean heart and good intent.
First highly to Thine honour
That Sovereign is of all succour.
And to thee Mother, Maiden clean
And to thine hallow all be done.
That this Mass be till our soul's health
Help and grace in all kinds wealth.
And to all we have in mind
Sib and friend in any kind.

Good Lord grant for this Mass
Of their sins forgiveness
And rest and peace that lasteth aye
To Christian souls passyd away
And to us all Thy succour send
And bring us all to Thy joy withoute ende.

AMEN.

To the priest hearken then
If thou ought of the letter can
His office prayer and pistille.[1]
And answer thereto with goodwill
Or on a book thyself it read.

. . . . . .

Then is time nigh of Sacring,
A little bell men is to ring;
There is skill to do reverence
To Jesus Christ's own presence,
That may loose all bands.
Kneeling hold up thy hands
And with inclination
Behold the Elevation.

(*In another MSS. is added*:)

And so the Elevation thou behold;
For that is He that Judas sold,
And sithen was scourged and done on rood
And for mankind there shed His blood

[1] Gospel and Epistle.

And died and rose and went to Heaven,
And yet shall come to doom us even,
Ilk man after he has done :
That same is He thou looks upon.

A Prayer for the Elevation

Welcome Lord in form of Bread !
For me thou suffered hard deed,
As thou bore the Crown of Thorn
Thou suffer me not to be forlorn.

. . . . . .

When the priest the elevation has made
He will spread his arms abroad.
This is the time to pray for the dead,
For all Christian souls' sake
This prayer as thou wilt take :
God for Thy holy grace
Hear our prayer here in this place.
Grant us Lord for our prayer
That Christian men that passed are
From this life that sinful is ;
That each one have a share of this Mass.
For their souls I pray dearly
That I shall nemnen serly[1]
That this may be to them mead.

[1] That I shall name severally.

Help and health from all dread.
For fathers' souls, mother and brother dear,
Sisters souls, sibmen and other sere,[1]
That us good would, or us good did,
Or any kindness unto us kid[2]
And to alle who in purgatory pyne
This Mass be mead and medecine.
To all Christian souls holy
Grant thy grace and thy mercy
Forgive them all their trespass
Loose their bonds and let them pass
From all pain and from all care
Into the joy that lasts evermore.

AMEN.

THE PAX

In thee that peace may not be,
If thou out of Charity be.
Then is good on God to crave
That thou Charity may have.
Wherefor, when the Priest the Pax wilt kiss,
Look that thou be saying this,
God's Lamb that best may
Do the sin of this world away
Of us have mercy and pity
And grant us peace and charity.

[1] Special ones. [2] Said.

THANKSGIVING AFTER MASS

God be thanked of all his works,
God be thanked of Priests and clerks,
God be thanked of every man,
And I thank him in that I can.
I thank God of his goodness
And also of this Mass
And of all the prayers that here are prayed
I pray him that he be payed ;
In mind of God here I me bless
With my blessing God send me his.

MEDITATYONS FOR GHOSTLY EXERCISE IN THE TYME OF THE MASSE

The priest going to Masse signifieth and representeth the Saviour of the world, our most Sweet Redeemer Christ Jesus, Which came from Heaven, to the vale of misery, this wretched world, to suffer Passion for man's Redemption. And therefore the process of the Masse representeth the very process of the Passion of Christ. The priest signifieth Christ, the Altar the Cross. The vestments signify the garments white and purple, with which Herod and the Jews did clothe our Saviour with great scorn and derision. The right corner of the Altar representeth the life of innocency that man lost by sin, restored again in the Life of our Most Blessed Saviour. The left end of the Altar signifieth this miserable life, the which we now be in. The Chalice doth signify the Sepulchre of our Lord. The Paten signifieth the stone that covered It. . . . Also the Bishop or Priest vested representeth the Son of God, Which did clothe Himself with the garment of our nature, in the

most glorious consecrated Temple, the Womb of the Most Blessed Virgin Mother of God. The Amice on his head doth signify His ghostly Strength. The white Alb doth signify His Innocency. The Chasuble His Charity. The kiss on the Altar doth signify the marriage between God and the Church. . . . When the priest standeth vested inclining before the Altar, let us have before the eyes of our soul our Most Sweet Saviour Who would vouchsafe to incline His Majesty, and wilfully, for our wealth and profit and salvation, suffered all their great blasphemies and all their aforesaid torments for our souls. . . . After the Lavatory, when the priest sayeth the Secrets in silence, consider with due thanks and praising the time before the Passion when the Saviour did withdraw Himself from the company of the Jews, and did give Him to solitariness, all secret in prayer and contemplation, praying the Eternal Father in great watching and abstinence for the health of many souls. . . . After "Ite, Missa est," the Priest standeth in the Midst of the Altar and so blesseth the people. Then call to your remembrance this Holy Meditation, how our Saviour standing in the midst of His disciples at the Mount of Olivet blessing them did ascend to Heaven. . . . This ascension of our Lord is signified by the words the priest said at the end

of the Masse, that is to say Ite, Missa est, which words do sound after the exposition of Doctors "Go and depart; for our Lord is sent and is offered up to His Eternal Father in oblation and sacrifice."

The Masse of Requiem

Also know that in the Masse of Requiem there is no Pax given to the people, signifying that the oblation in the Masse of Requiem is principally for the souls that be in Purgatory, where is no discord.[1]

[1] Langford's *Meditations* has been edited for the Henry Bradshaw Society by Dr Wickham Legg.

LYDGATE

Merita Missæ

God of Heaven that shook Earth and Hell
Give me grace some word to tell
To the lewd that cannot read,
But the Pater Noster and the Creed.

. . . . . .

When thou comste to the Holy Place
Caste Holy Water in thy face
And pray to God that made us all
Thy venial sins may from thee fall.
Then look to the High Altar
And pray to Him that hangeth there,[1]
Wherever in the land thou wend
That he will be at thy last end.

. . . . . .

And when he[2] ringeth the cros-bel
Pray then for another skill
That thou be worthy to see that sight
That shal be in his hands light.

[1] *i.e.* in the Pyx. [2] The priest.

And when he resteth Him up on hight [1]
Kneel adown with all thy might
And if thou ask anything
Speak dreadfully as to a King.
And look thou ask no thing of right
But of His grace and of His might.

The Devotion ends—

God that mad more and less
Give us grace to hear Mass,
And so to fight and to pray
That we be savëd at Doom's Day.

A Meditation on the Passion in Verse

Behold thy King!
He that hath wept Blood-wet
Where their scourges met.

Full fast they gone Him ding [2]
And at their pillar swinge.
His fair Face fouled with spitting,
The King crowned with thorns,
Full sore He is punished.

Alas my Joy, my Sweetness!
He is deemed for to hang,
Nailed These His Hands,

[1] *i.e.* lifteth Him up on high. [2] Whip.

Nailed These His Feet ;
And pierced was His Side
So seemly and so sweet.

Naked was His sweet Breast
And bloody red His Side ;
Wan was His fair Head,
His Woundes deep and wide.
In fine fallings off His Flesh
His Blood began down-glide,
As stream doth off the strand.
Is it not to hide.

To think heartily on this
This is great pity.
How He was deemëd to this Death
And maked hang upon the Tree,
That is our Holy Head ;
Death He was to dole,
That is our ghostly Bread ;
And followed as a fool,
In Heaven the Angels' Food !

A wonder 'tis to see,
Whoso hath understood,
How God of Majesty
Was done upon the Rood,
With thieves as whereof were He.

Who will have mind of this
For Christ of sin sees he.
But sooth is that is said,
That Love leadeth the ring
That Him so low have laid;
But Love it was no thing.

Jesus receive mine heart,
Into Thy Love me bring,
All my desire Thou art,
I covet Thy Coming.
Make Thou me clear of sin,
And let me never twin,[1]
That I Thy joy may win,
And see Thy Face in bliss,
That never may decline.
Jesus my soul Thou mend,
Thy Love unto me send
That I may with Thee dwell
In joy withouten end.
In love Thou wend my thoughts
And lift my heart to Thee,
The soul that Thou hast bought
Before Thee make it bow.
But Thee I covet nought,
This world for Thee I flee,
Thou art that I have sought;

[1] Change.

Thy Face when might I see ?
Thou makest my soul clear,
How long shall I be here ?
When may I know Thee near
Thy melody to hear ?

A Prayer to Our Ladye,
from the "Speculum Christiani"

Mary Moder wel thou be
Mary Moder thinke on me
Meyden and Moder was never none
Togeder Lady save thee alone.
Swete Lady, Meyden clene
Shield me from all shame and tene,
And out of synn Lady shield thou me
And out of debt for charity.
Lady for thy joyes five
Get me grace in this life
To know and keep above all things
Christian Faith and God's bidding ;
And bravely win all that I need
To me and mine clothes and feed.[1]
Help me Lady and all mine.
Shield me Lady from hell's pains,
Shield me Lady from villany,
And from all wicked company.
Shield me Lady from all shame,

[1] Food.

And from all wicked fame.
Swete Lady, Meyden mylde
From all foemen me shield.
That the fiend me not deere [1]
Swete Lady thou me weere.
Both by day and by night
Help me Lady with all thy might.
For my friends I pray to thee
That they may saved be
To their souls and their life.
Lady, for thy joyes five.
For my foemen I pray also
That they may here so do
That they nor I in wrath die.
Swete Lady I thee pray
And they that be in deadly sin
Let them never die therein.
But swete Lady thou them rede
For to amend their misdeeds
Sweet Lady for me thou pray to Heaven's King
That He grant me housel, shrift and good ending.

[1] Dare.

CHAPTER III

OF THEOLOGIANS

THE Church has, broadly speaking, to make provision for two classes of people: those whose religion is part of their life, and those whose religion is the whole of it.

For the first of these we have seen that abundant provision was made, during the times we are considering, in miracle plays and legends, in books of instruction, prayer, and devotion. It remains, however, to consider the second class. This consists, for the most part, of the theologians and scholars, the saints and mystics, whom we may call, for want of a better title, religious experts, in view of the special and expert knowledge which they possess.

For theologians and scholars are, so to say, the scientists of religion, as the saints and mystics are the artists. Sometimes, indeed very often, the scientist and the artist are the same person; but for our purpose it is simpler to consider them separately.

The artist in religion requires no specialised

outward training; he may always be met with anywhere. All environments are favourable to him, for the power that is in him is strong enough to make all things serve his purpose.

But the scientist must have special outward training and environment, at all events for part of his life.

In the times with which we are dealing he was naturally to be met with most frequently in religious houses. We hear a great deal of the want of learning in religious houses in the times immediately preceding their dissolution; and, doubtless, in many of them a certain indifference to learning prevailed. That it was by no means general, however, is evident, if only from the fact that most, if not all, of the English religious had hostels—"lodgings," as they were called—at Oxford or Cambridge, which were in fact nurseries to which their younger members were sent to pursue their studies and take their degrees. At Oxford the number of these hostels was large enough to make their abolition a considerable loss to the revenues of the University, not to speak of the serious diminution in the number of scholars. Erasmus complained bitterly of the damage that Luther was doing to learning in his war against the Church, and Erasmus held no brief for religious orders. He knew, however, something of their

work at the English Universities; for he had himself lodged during his stay in Cambridge with Abbot Charnock at the house of the Austin Friars, while at Oxford his friend Richard Kidderminster presided over the Winchcombe lodgings, one of those numerous hostels, whose staircases may still be seen on the way to the gardens of Worcester (then Gloucester) College. Oxford, too, was still the home of those "Grey Friars" who, in the beginning of their foundation there, were such enthusiastic scholars and "so fervent in hearing the Divine Law, and in scholastic exercises, that they hesitated not to go every day to the School of Theology, however distant, barefoot, in the bitter cold or deep mud."

It is true that sound learning had somewhat changed its character since the Grey Friars first settled in Oxford. Scholasticism, which had produced a Duns Scotus and had found for the present its last brilliant though erring exponent in William of Ockham, needed, if it was to be effective as a philosophic and religious system, deep if not original thinkers to direct its working; and the energies of such were, by the needs of the time, turned into another direction. Dialectical disputations had been a valuable training for the intellect in quiet times. But now the very foundations of the Truth were being undermined, and it

was necessary, not so much that scholars should speculate on truths already known and held, but that they should reaffirm the truths themselves, and show less learned folk the solid bases on which they stood. Hence most of the scholars of the day became, in a more or less degree, controversialists.

William of Woodford

One of the earliest of these controversial scholars was William of Woodford, an Oxford Franciscan. His house had never wanted for great names, since the days when Grosseteste was its first lecturer, in those early days of its foundation, when, "along with strict silence, constant prayer and vigils that lasted all night, the Brethren were so full of fun amongst themselves, that a mute could scarcely refrain from laughter at the sight."

Educated in so great a tradition, William of Woodford became, first as scholar, then as teacher in the schools, an ornament to his order. In their early days, he and John Wycliffe formed one of those friendships that university life fosters; but their friendship was broken by Wycliffe's defection from the Faith. The *Confessio*, written in 1381, in which he repudiated the doctrine of Transubstantiation, drew from his former friend his earliest extant work, *Septuaginta Questiones de Sacra-*

mento Eucharistiæ. The *Questiones* are lectures, which were probably delivered at the Church of the Grey Friars in London as a preparation for the Feast of Corpus Christi, 1381.

At the council which condemned Wycliffe's writings, William Woodford was chosen as his formal opponent. In 1389 he was lecturer at Oxford; the *Quatuor Determinationes*, which he delivered in the course of that year, are in the Bodleian Library, as are also his *De causis condemnationis articulorum damnatorum Johannis Wyclevi* and his *Responsiones contra Wyclevum et Lollardos*. Another of his works, *De veneratione Imaginum*, is in the British Museum. Woodford attained a high position in his order; he was first Regent Master in Theology in Oxford, and afterwards Vicar of the Provincial Master. From this time to his death, in 1411, he lived for the most part at the Grey Friars in London, engaged, so far as we can tell, in combating heresy. He died at Colchester, and was buried there.

Thomas Waldensis

It is impossible to pass over Woodford's pupil, Thomas Netter of Walden, "Thomas Waldensis," a London Carmelite, famous as the author of the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*. He was a Doctor of Divinity, and "most learned in the holy scriptures."

Thomas is accounted a Doctor of the Carmelites; he was head of the English Province, and, as such, was present at the Council of Constance. Henry V., whose beloved friend and confessor he was, died in his arms and confided to him the care of his infant son. Thomas's lifelong work was the defence of the Faith, on behalf of which he wrote his long work, in four books, *Doctrinale Fidei Ecclesiæ Catholicæ contra Wyclevistas et Husitas.* The subjects of the different parts of the book are as follows :—

1. *De Capite Ecclesiæ Jesu Christo.*
2. *De Corpore Christi.*
3. *De Religiosis Perfectis in Lege Christi.*
4. (i) *Quomodo Religiosi in Ecclesia Dei possunt beate exigere victum suum.*
   (ii) *De Sacramentis.*
   (iii) *De Sacramentalibus.*

Thomas Waldensis' extant works were printed in Paris in the seventeenth century; but the best edition of them, by Father Blanchiotti, a Jesuit, was published in Venice in 1757.

But the scholars of the time were by no means purely controversialists. Much of the learning of the schools was concerned with explanation of, and comment on, the sacred Scriptures.

It is sometimes believed, even now, that there were no translations of the Bible before Wycliffe's

time, and that study and knowledge of the Scriptures was apt to be discouraged.

Biblical Studies

Thomas of Woodstock,[1] however, had an English Bible, and so had Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester ; there was also a copy in the library of the Brigittine nuns of Syon. Bibles are often mentioned in wills of the period, and bequeathed as great treasures, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that many copies of Catholic translations of the Bible were destroyed in the wholesale sack of libraries that seems to have taken place under Henry VIII. and Edward VI.

Sir Thomas More, in his treatise against Tyndal, says that no translations of the Scriptures prior to the Lollards were forbidden by authority. "I myself," he says, "have seen and can show you Bibles fair and old, written in English, which have been seen and known by the Bishop of the Diocese, and left in the hands of lay men and women whom he knew to be good and Catholic people." No one can accuse Sir Thomas More, the friend of Erasmus, of objecting to vernacular editions of the Scriptures ; yet it was he who judged "Tyndale's and that ilk to be worthy of the fire."

We learn something of the study bestowed upon

[1] See *Cambridge History of Literature.*

the Holy Scriptures by scholars, for the most part members of the religious orders, by examining the lists of writers and their works given in Leland, Pits, and Bâle, as well as the catalogues, with which the orders themselves furnish us, of their own distinguished men. Anything like a list of these commentators and their works would be a formidable undertaking. There were prelates such as John Morton, Bishop of Ely, whose literary pursuits did not, however, absorb his mind to the exclusion of practical matters; for it was he who built the fen drain which runs parallel with the Nene for fifteen miles, and is still known to some of the villages through which it passes as "Morton's Lode." It is perhaps worthy of note that the monks of Crowland, Thorney, and Ely raised the banks which to this day preserve those lands from flood.

There were Dominicans also, like Nicholas Gorham, who was educated at Merton, and, being sent to Paris, won renown as one of the most learned Englishmen there. His lectures and spiritual duties (he became confessor to the King of France, and preached often before the court) did not prevent his writing volumes of commentaries on the Holy Scriptures; they included the greater part of the Old Testament and the Synoptic Gospels. There were Friars Observants like Peter

Russel, who became English Provincial of his order. There were Benedictines like Richard Kidderminster; and there were Augustinians like John Capgrave, scholar and historian.

John Capgrave

Capgrave most probably received his first instruction from the Austin Friars in his native town of Lynn. In his later education both Oxford and Cambridge claim a share. He was a travelled person, for after his ordination to the priesthood in 1417 or 1418, he went to Rome. After his return he settled down in the house of the Austin Friars at Lynn, and began to write his commentaries, presenting that on the Acts of the Apostles to Grey, Bishop of Ely, "in remembrance of his great kindness to a sick traveller in Rome"; and that on the Book of Genesis to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. At the same time he was probably collecting materials for his Chronicles.

Capgrave was an earnest opponent of the Lollards. In his work, *De Illustribus Henricis*, he gives an account of the death of John Cobham, Earl of Oldcastle. "For their sakes," he says, "into whose hands these writings may fall, I will declare some of his errors to posterity, that they may not think that he was put to so shameful death except for a just cause.

"1. He declared that none ought to worship the Mother of God or the other saints.

"2. Also that confession ought to be made to God alone.

"Also, that in the Sacrament of the Altar, after Consecration, the Bread remains unchanged.

"3. He condemned civil property, and hated priests and churches as abominations.

"The Duke of Bedford and those who were present at his death urged him to make faithful and lowly confession of his sins, offering him time and his choice from among many priests. But he said, though Peter and Paul were present, he would not confess to them."

Many of Capgrave's Latin works have been lost. We have his commentaries on the Creed, on the Acts of the Apostles, and on Genesis, as well as the *Nova Legenda Angliæ*. His *Life of St Katherine*, in English, is in the Bodleian Library, and a *Guide to the Antiquities of Rome*, attributed to him, is in the library of All Souls. Capgrave became Prior of his house and Provincial of his order, and, according to Bale, died at Lynn in 1464.

The Carmelites seem to have been voluminous Scripture commentators. John Malden, for instance, a Carmelite who was educated at Cambridge, took his Master's degree and became Prior of Malden, besides writing an introduction to the

Scriptures and minute commentaries on Genesis, left to his house forty-eight lectures on the Psalms. Peter de Sancta Fide wrote fourteen books of comment on St Paul; and Stephen Partington, an Oxford Carmelite and Doctor of Theology, found time, in spite of being Bishop of St David's, confessor to the Queen and Prince of Wales and "many of the chief nobles," and a popular preacher to boot, to write and lecture voluminously on both Old and New Testaments.

It seems worthy of note that the Carmelite houses in Norfolk, especially the little house of Lynn, were, if one may judge by the frequent mention of their members in the lists of scholars and writers, particularly learned and devout.

The Mirror of Life is a book which must be noticed here, if only because it was for a long time wrongly believed to be the work of Richard of Hampole.

It is a Latin paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer in many thousand verses, written by John de Waldeby, an Augustinian canon of York, who was a student of the convent of Oxford, and became Provincial of his order in England. It was translated into English verse by William of Nassyngton, Proctor in the Ecclesiastical Court of York.

CHAPTER IV

OF MYSTICS

THE knowledge of the mystic is not gained in the schools. Like the knowledge of the artist, it is primarily intuitive and experimental. The things which the artist sees are things hidden from his fellows. The mists of the morning, the colours of the sky, a cloud of spring hyacinths, a mud-bank wet with sea-water—on such things a wise man looks, conscious of how much he does not see. The artist looks on them wondering how much he can and dare tell of what he sees, yet knowing well how little of the whole that is.

So it is with the mystic. "Incerta et occulta sapientiæ tuæ manifestasti mihi": this is the cry of the true mystic. But there are many varieties of pseudo-mysticism. There is an intellectual mysticism which, severed from a sound philosophic system, ends in fog and confusion; there is a so-called psychic mysticism, which means tampering with real and dangerous, because little

understood and often evil, forces; there is even a material mysticism, contradiction in terms though the phrase may seem, which stands for a subtle form of self-indulgence and is often described as "union with nature."

But true religious mysticism is none of these things. It is a spiritual state in which there are many degrees. It is the state of the fearless child who listens to the thunder and says, "What a wonderful voice God has when He speaks aloud!" It is the state of one who, walking in the deep silence of nature's many voices, under the high dome of his Father's house, is stricken breathless by the sudden realisation that all things around him have some great and wonderful secret to tell. Upwards and outwards he yearns, bending all the faculties of mind and spirit to reach it, but it is ever beyond him. Nature sings it loud and clear; it is written plain on every leaf and blade of grass. That he knows; but as some notes are pitched too high to be heard by human ears, as there are some colours so intense that they are beyond the sight of human eyes, so this great secret is written in letters of flame so bright that the eye of the soul is blind to it; it is sung out in tones of melody so piercing that the dull ear of the spirit cannot respond to its vibrations. For God is the Secret which nature both hides and reveals: a secret

which some men seek to learn with a passion of desire which their fellows call madness. Mad the saint and mystic has ever been called, and mad he is, by the world's standard of sanity; for the state of the mystic is that of the lover of God. He hears, at first faintly and rarely, but more distinctly and oftener as he strains his ear to listen, a note here and there of the hymn of praise that all things sing around him, of the part this old sad world is taking in the song of the morning stars. Sometimes faint whispers reach his ear, messages from the Beloved; in dreams he sees glimpses of ineffable and incomparable beauty, which he recognises for the Object of his desire. So strong grows his longing that he can bear it no longer. Like Abraham, he goes forth, not knowing whither he goes, on a great quest, on a high adventure; often in silence and darkness, but now and then guided and cheered by whispers and gleams and strains of unearthly music. Then there is a moment of sight, an ecstasy of worship; Moses hidden in a cleft of the rock sees the Glory of the Lord pass by. The Glory fades and the darkness falls again as he climbs the heights. But beyond the darkness lies the Mount of Vision, the place where God talks face to face with His lover, as a man talks with his friend. On the glittering peaks of that mount he can read the letters of fire

in which is written the story of God's purpose through the ages ; he can hear the strains of the mighty pæan that the universe is lifting. But he cannot stay to read the scroll or to listen to the symphony : he is looking upon God.

The Vision passes ; the forty days are over, but the glory of that sight remains. The mystic must veil the brightness of his face, for his fellows may not look thereon.

Surely his quest is ended now, for on the Mount he spoke with God, and lived. But no. There is a Heavenly Lover, whose Delights are with the sons of men ; there is a Banqueting-house where God tabernacles among men. It is there that the adventure ends. There and there alone, under the Banner of Love, where St John lies in silence on the Bosom of his Lord and feels his pulses thrilling to each throb of the Sacred Heart, is the goal of the mystic's quest. There and there only may he rest in this world or the next.

" On her tongue and in her heart," writes the biographer of St Katherine of Siena, " she had nought save Jesus ; her eyes gazed fixedly upon Jesus, nor did she open her eyes to behold other objects, when they were not such as could guide her to Jesus. There she was often seen in ecstasy, and lifted up in wondrous abstraction and excess of mind."

And she herself says, "Very often my sweet Saviour bears me company when I say the Psalms and walk up and down my little cell. But whenever He sees me weary He sits over there, and I sit at His feet and we talk together."

These are some of the words in which a great saint spoke of her intercourse with her Beloved. "But," says St John of the Cross, "it would be foolishness to think that the language of love can be at all explained in words of any kind."

And so in effect say all the mystics:—"The Vision of God, the Converse of God, the Revelation of God are as it were thus, but the reality no pen can write, no tongue can tell."

Richard of Hampole, the father of English mystics, whose *Fire of Love* Richard Misyn made known to fifteenth-century readers, tells how, in his contemplations, he experienced that glow of divine Charity that he can only liken to the warmth of fire in the breast; and that Converse which St Paul describes as hearing "unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter," came to Richard Rolle as a strain of heavenly music, raising his spirit to an ecstasy of joy.

Richard of Hampole

Richard Rolle was a hermit, but, unlike most hermits, he was unattached to any abbey or

church. He wrote both in Latin and English, largely in English verse. Wharton, in his history of English poetry, written at the end of the eighteenth century, after mentioning his chief metrical works, introduces some lines from one of them, the *Pricke of Conscience*, with the following remark :—" Our hermit's poetry, which indeed from these titles promises little entertainment, has no tincture of sentiment, imagination, or excellence. The following verses are extracted from the *Pricke of Conscience*, one of the most common MSS. in our libraries, and I prophesy I am its last transcriber." How truly characteristic of the inimitable complacency of the eighteenth-century *litterateur !*

Richard of Hampole lived and wrote in the thirteenth century, but his *Fire of Love* and *Mending of Life* were both translated into English for the benefit of Margaret of Heslynton, herself a recluse, by her friend Richard Misyn, a Carmelite. Little is definitely known of him, but he is probably identical with the Richard Misyn, suffragan and Carmelite, who was admitted a member of the Corpus Christi Guild of York in 1460. He may very well be the same person as the " Bischope Musin " whose name is engraved on a cup which belonged to the guild.

In the wake of Richard Rolle a company of

mystical and contemplative writers sprang up. The names at least of two of these are known to everyone: those of Walter Hylton the Carthusian, and Dame Juliana of Norwich. They were almost contemporaries, and Dame Juliana was familiar with Hylton's writings.

Walter Hylton

Walter Hylton, afterwards an Augustinian canon at Thurgarton in Nottinghamshire, was first a Carthusian of the famous House of Shene, where both Colet and Wolsey desired to pass the last days of their lives. He was a most prolific writer, both in Latin and English, and for a long time many of his works were wrongly attributed to Richard Rolle.

Some of his books, such as his *Treatise on the Mixed Life* and his *Ladder of Perfection*, were written for the help of people wishing to live a devout life in the world. The latter has always kept its place in the affection of Catholics. It was first translated into English "by the command of the sweet Ladye Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby." There are very numerous MSS. copies. It was again translated and published by Fathers Guy and Dalgairns in 1869. The eighteenth-century bibliographer Dibdin knew it. He gives an extract from it which, he says, "serves to show,

amongst other things, how widely and dangerously some of the most consoling doctrines of the Church and religion were expounded by enthusiastic writers of former days" !

Many of Hylton's contemplative works have been preserved. Most of them are in Latin. We may mention his *Treatise on Contemplation*; his *Method of Holy Living*; his *Epistola Aurea* to Adam Horsley, who afterwards became a Carthusian, on the religious life; his *Cloud of Unknowing*; and his *Song of Angels*, a very beautiful mystical treatise. Like other mystics, Hylton finds that he can only describe spiritual experiences by physical parallels. "Sometimes a man," he says, "setteth the thought of his heart only on the Name of Jesus, and steadfastly holdeth it thereto, and in a short time he thinketh that that Name burneth him to great comfort and sweetness, and he thinketh that the Name soundeth in his heart delectably, as it were a song. And the virtue of this liking is so mighty, that it draweth in all the wits of the soul thereto. Whoso may feel this sound and this sweetness verily in his heart, wit thee well, that it is of God, and as long as he is meek he shall not be deceived. . . . For when a soul affecteth him to Jesus, truly and meekly putting all his heart and desire in Him, and truly keepeth Him in his mind, our Lord Jesus when He wills, purgeth the affections of the

soul, and filleth it and feedeth it with sweetness of Himself, and maketh His Name in the feeling of the soul as honey and as song, and as anything that is delectable, so that he liketh his soul evermore to cry Jesus, Jesus ! "

It is of interest to note that amongst Hylton's works is a treatise entitled *Conclusiones de Imaginibus contra Hæreticos*.

Juliana of Norwich

Dame Juliana of Norwich, Hylton's contemporary, was an anchoress. Very little is known about her external life, except from her writings. From them we learn that she was born about 1343 ; that she was nigh to death in 1373, when her visions began ; and that she was still alive in 1413. We are not even certain of her name, for the title Dame Juliana may have arisen from her connection with the Church of St Julian at Norwich, to which her cell was attached. Blomefield, in his *History of Norfolk*, says : " This little Church was founded before the Conquest, and was given to the nuns of Carrow by King Stephen." " Carrow or Carhoe," he goes on to say, " stands on a hill, on the side of a river, about a furlong from Corisford or Southgate. . . . There was also an anchorage by it, and in 1428 the Lady Juliana Lampset was anchoress there. . . . This nunnery had for many

years been a school or place of education for the young ladies of the chief families of the diocese who boarded with and were educated by the nuns." This Lady Juliana may have been our Dame Juliana; if so, she was about seventy years old at the time.

She says that her Revelations "were shown to a simple creature, unlettered, in the year of our Lord 1373, which creature had often desired three gifts from God. The first was a mind of His Passion; the second was bodily sickness, in youth at thirty years of age; the third was to have, of God's gift, three wounds." She closes the account of her Revelation thus: "This book is begun by God's grace, but it is not yet performed as to my right. . . . And from the time that it was showed, I desired oftentimes to learn what was our Lord's meaning. And fifteen years after or more, I was answered in ghostly understanding, saying thus: Wouldst thou learn thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well; Love was His meaning. Who showed it thee? Love. Wherefore showed it He? For Love. Hold thee therein and thou shalt learn more and more in the same. . . . Then I learned that Love was our Lord's meaning."

This that Dame Juliana tells us, of her ever-increasing comprehension of the meaning of her revelations, is borne out by the MSS. that are

extant. Those which were in use until 1909 contain the concluding passage quoted above, and are evidently her later and more matured writings. But when the Amherst Library was sold, in that year, an earlier MSS., which Blomefield describes in his *History*, and which had been lost sight of, came into the possession of the British Museum ; it was published in 1911. It differs in many respects from the other MSS., notably in the absence of the concluding paragraph, and it is obviously her first account of her Revelations, written before the " fifteen or more years " of meditation and thought of which she speaks.

Margery Kempe of Lynn

Norfolk produced another recluse, who was also a mystical writer, Margery Kempe of Lynn. All that is known of her is contained in a very tiny MSS. in the Cambridge University Library, which was printed by Pepwell in 1521 : *The Booke of Margery Kempe of Lynn*, it is called.

Margery had " great wonder that our Lord should become Man and suffer so grievous pains for her that was so unkind a creature to Him. And then with great weeping she asked our Lord how she might best please Him ; and He answered to her soul, saying, ' Daughter, have mind of thy wickedness and think of My goodness.' . . . When she

saw a crucifix, or if she saw a man beat a child or smite a horse with a whip, if she might see it or hear it, she thought she saw our Lord beaten or wounded like as she saw in the child or the beast. . . . The more she increased in love and in devotion, the more she increased in sorrow and contrition, in lowliness and meekness . . . so that if she saw any creature punished or chastised, she would think that she had been more worthy to be chastised than that creature was for her unkindness against God. Then would she weep for her own sin and for compassion of that creature."

Dear Margery Kempe of Lynn! We would fain know more of you and of your converse with your Lord and ours, than is contained in these few pages.

We do not even know where her cell was, though it is probable that it was in or near to Lynn. Some few miles from Lynn, near to the highroad, there is an anchorite's cell in excellent preservation. It is attached to the parish church, and is, or was a few years ago, used for a coal cellar. Nothing seems to be known of the anchorite who lived there. Can it be that it was there that Margery Kempe lived and prayed, and there wept at the sound of the lash that urged the tired horses along the road to Lynn?

Recluses were at this time so numerous as to constitute almost a separate order. Most of the

great religious houses and parish churches had a recluse attached to them, the blessing of whose presence was highly valued by the house or parish. There was an office for the immuring of a recluse. The ceremony was performed by the bishop, who laid down certain conditions: *i.e.* a convenient place must be selected for the anchorage, which must be large enough for the comfort of a single person, and the recluse must be assured of the supply of his daily wants.

We know of certain famous anchorages or ankerholds where a long line of recluses lived and prayed and died. Westminster was such an one. The recluse or anker there was a well-known person as early as the reign of Richard II., who, we are told, "when he went to meet Wat Tyler, went to Westminster Abbey, then to the Church and so to the High Altar, where he devoutly prayed and offered. . . . After which he spake with the anker to whom he confessed himself." There was an ankerhold at Cripplegate and another at Bishopsgate in the City of London. A very famous ankerhold was that of London Wall, and the best-known of its inmates was "Wretched Symon," whose treatise, *The Fruite of Redemption*, was published in 1514 by Wynkyn de Worde, with the following imprimatur by Richard Fitzjames,[1] Bishop of

[1] Dean Colet's "harassing" bishop.

London: "Here endeth the treatise called *Fruite of Redemcyon*, which devout treatise I, Richard, unworthy Byschope of London, have studiously read and overseen, and the same approve as much as in me is, to be read by the true servants of sweete Jesus to their greate consolation and ghostly comfort, and to the merit of the devout Father, compounder of the same."

The work itself consists of devout meditations on the Life and Passion of our Lord.

Another person of whom we should like to know more than we do is John Morton, who, with his wife Julia, left the world for the contemplative life in 1437. They entered the Augustinian Order at York, and the instrument of their reception by William, the Prior of the House of York, is extant. John Morton has not left much behind him: only parts of a few short treatises and a translation of Bonaventura's *Passio Christi*.

It is probable that the contemplatives of the time produced a great many translations of the writings of the great foreign mystics. There are numerous translations of Bonaventura, of St Bernard, of Hugh of St Victor, and of many others, in all the great libraries. One of these translations deserves notice: it is an English version of the Revelations of St Katherine of Siena, the work of Dan James, a professed Brother of

Syon. Dan James called his book, which was published at the command of the lady abbess for the use of the sisters, by the very appealing title of *The Orchard of Syon.*

These translations were perhaps the more popular because English mystical writers were comparatively few in number. The many mystics who attained the goal of their desires from hermits' cells or contemplative cloisters or some common walk of life, have left us no word of the way they went.

That the life of contemplation was known and loved, there are abundant signs; but, after all, the business of the mystic is not to write, but to attain to union with God. When he has done that, anything may follow. Joan the Maid was a mystic.

Mystical Literature

Extracts from

I. MISYN'S TRANSLATION OF ROLLE'S "FIRE OF LOVE" AND "MENDING OF LIFE"

II. THE BOOKE OF MARGERY KEMPE OF LYNN

III. JOHN MORTON, AUGUSTINIAN CANON OF YORK, ON TEMPTATION

IV. WALTER HYLTON

1. THE FIVE DEGREES OF PRAYER
2. OF TRANSFORMING THE SOUL INTO THE LOVE OF CHRIST

EXTRACTS FROM RICHARD MISYN'S TRANSLATION OF THE "FIRE OF LOVE" and "THE MENDING OF LIFE"

Richard Misyn's Introduction[1]

For the Reverence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and at thy request and desire Sister Margaret, desiring to do something for increase of ghostly comfort to thee and others who understand no Latin, I, simplest among lettered men and most unprofitable in living, have taken to translate this work from Latin to English for the edification of many souls.

And since all God's pleasure and the ghostly life of man's soul stands in perfect love; therefore this holy man Richard Hampole has named his book *Incendium Amoris*, that is to say, *The Fire of Love*, which book neither in sentence nor substance I wish to change, but truly after my understanding to write it in good exposition. Therefore all readers thereof I pray, if you find ought thankworthy, give to God thanksgiving and to this holy man, and if anything is mis-said put it down to my

[1] Rendered into modern English.

ignorance. Nevertheless, I make protestation that I have no intent to write or say anything against the faith or determination of Holy Church. God is my witness.

Furthermore Sister have in mind the mortality of this life and always keep in thy hand some holy lesson. For if thou keep holiness thou shalt not love fleshly sins, and wherein holiness stands I said before is perfect love.

But Perfect Love what may that be? In sooth when thy God, as it behoves thee, thou lovest for Himself, and thou lovest thy friend in God, and thine enemy for God; for neither God without thy neighbour, nor thy neighbour without God is truly loved.

Perfect Love therefore standeth in love of God and of thy neighbour, and love of God in keeping His commandments. Keep therefore His commandments, and when thou enterest into prayer or contemplation, plainly forsake all worldly thoughts, and forget the charge of all outward things, and take heed to God alone. If thou find any doubts, call to thee serious counsel for fear thou err; namely in such things as touch the twelve articles of thy Faith, and of the Most Holy Trinity, and other divers matters, as in the holy book following are written for our learning.

Richard of Hampole says in his prologue: "This

book I offer not to philosophers or wise men of this world, nor to great divines lapped in infinite questions but unto ignorant and untaught men, more busy to learn how to love God than to know many things."

Of the GREAT FIRE OF LOVE so great beauty grows in souls, that a righteous man would rather choose to suffer all pain than once grieve God, although he knew that by Penance he might rise, and afterwards please God more, and be holier. For so perfect is this understanding, that nothing to God is more dear than innocence, nothing more pleasant than good-will. If we truly love God rightly we would sooner lose great reward in Heaven than once sin venially, for most righteous it is to ask no reward for righteousness but the friendship of God—that is Himself.

O Good Jesus here chastise, here cut, here smite, here burn and whatsoever pleases Thy Goodness do to me, so that I, in time to come, have no ill, but may feel Thy Love here and everlastingly.

O Lord make my heart broad, that it may be more able this love to perceive. . . .

A true soul, spouse of Jesus Christ, casts out pride, for it deeply loves meekness; vainglory

it fears, for mirth everlasting only desiring Christ it follows; fleshly liking and softness it hates, for, having before known the sweetness of everlasting honey, it always desires to feel the love of the loveliest.

The Mending of Life

Contemplative life has three parts; Reading, Prayer, and Meditation. In reading God speaks to us; in prayer we speak to God; in meditation angels come down to us, and teach us, that we err not. . . .

To me it seems that contemplation is joyful song of God's Love, taken in mind, with sweetness of angel praising. This is Jubilation; that is the end of perfect prayer and of devotion in this life.

FROM "THE BOOKE OF MARGERY KEMPE OF LYNN"

She said, "Good Lord I would be laid naked on a hurdle for Thy Love, all men to wonder on me and to cast filth and dirt on me and be drawn from town to town every day of my lifetime if thou wert pleased thereby and no man's soul hindered."

"Daughter," He said, "as oftentimes as thou sayest or thinkest; 'Worshipped be all the holy places in Jerusalem where Christ suffered bitter pain and passion in!' thou shalt have the same pardon as they that went there with their bodily presence, both to thyself, and those that thou wilt give to."

"Lord," she said, "for Thy great pain have mercy on my little pain."

Our Lord Jesus said to her: "Patience is more worth than miracles doing. Daughter it is more pleasure to me, that thou should suffer despites, scorns, shames, reproofs, wrongs and diseases than if thine head were striken off three times a day, every day in seven years."

When she was in great trouble our Lord said: "Daughter I must needs comfort thee, for now thou hast the right way to Heaven. By this way came I and all My disciples, for now thou shalt know the better what sorrow and shame I suffered for thy love and thou shalt have the more compassion when thou thinkest on My passion."

"O my dear worthy Lord," she said, "these graces Thou shouldst show to religious men and priests."

Our Lord said to her again: "Nay my daughter for that I love best they love not; and that is shames, reproofs, scorns, and despites of the people; and therefore they shall not have this grace, for, daughter, he that dreadeth the shames of this world may not perfectly love God."

Here endeth a short treatise of a devout ancress called Margery Kempe of Lynn.

JOHN MORTON

Of Temptation[1]

Sometimes also the fiend bringeth to the mind of a body his old time sins, which he has before time done away thoroughly, by confession and pure contrition, and makes him believe they are not forgiven him. Or else he brings him in doubt whether they be forgiven him or not, which he knew before soothfastly. And that does the enemy, through a blinding and a withdrawing his mind from his shrift made before, or of other good deeds.

Whose suggestion in this case thou shalt sharply agaynstand on this wise, when thou shalt see thy conscience troubled and tarried for evil manner of confession of thy sins, which thou knowest well thou hast been shriven of beforetime, and taken and done penance for them.

When conscience is stirred by temptation and tarrying of the enemy, make thou dissimulation

[1] From a MS. in the Bodleian Library.

and feigning warily, as though thou thought nought thereof, and leave off as soon as thou may, and flee away privily and follow it not indeed, though all thy false conscience gainsay thee. For confession of sin, though it be profitable to every man, who is stirred to it, by a true conscience and wholesome compunction, nevertheless it is unspeedful and unprofitable in one who is stirred to it by false opinion or doubtings and a fearful and a bitter insending[1] of the fiend.

But you shall understand, that this manner of treating confession is not meant for contempt and despite of the Sacrament of Confession, and the ordinance of holy books; but for a counsell and a wariness of offholding of the temptations of the fiend.

For all things are well done, that are done with a good intent though it all seems nought for a time in the sight of man; for the intent and cause alone makes all things for to be medeful or unprofitable. This is the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the fiend tempted Him and set Him on a pinacle of the temple, and bade Him if He were God's Son that He should cast down Himself to the ground. Nevertheless He did nought at all as the fiend bade Him, but He came down softly, by the wings of discretion passing wisely through

[1] Inspiration.

His enticements and His temptations, giving us an example that when the fiend stirs anything under colour of good and happiness, we shall not in any way bow to his bidding and fulfil his suggestions, but we shall heedfully by way of discretion agaynstand him.

WALTER HYLTON

The Five Degrees of Prayer

Degrees by which a Man Passeth Forth to Contemplation

The First Degree is in tears and in sighing and in sorrow for sins and in compunction and in compassion of Christ's Passion and in pity, feeling of dis-eases and wretchedness of his even-Christians, and in strong striving against all manner of evil; against all wicked works, wicked words and wicked wills, and also wicked thoughts, with much pain and sore striving of body and soul for to stand against them.

The Second Degree is great fervour and burning desire with continuance of prayer for to please Jesus Christ, for to love Him with all the heart and all the mind and for to seek comfort of His Gracious Presence. And this burning desire will cleanse thy conscience from all wish for sin, both of that which is before done and of that which he shall live each day in. This work is of great travail

and with wonderful busyness, a little tempered with rest in Christ.

The Third Degree is a wonderful sweetness and gladness of rest and cleanness, for in it cometh the Grace of the Holy Ghost down into a soul. Then it lighteneth and purgeth so the soul that it is all on high and it anointeth the soul with oil of ghostly gladness and turneth it all into charity of Christ, so that it thinketh that all the limbs of the body and all the making of it, with the creatures, are a melody of the harpe. And then after this is the soul somewhat able to ghostly halsing[1] of Jesus Christ, that is her sweet Spouse.

And the Fourth Degree is rest of soul and body. It is when a man is dead and buried to the world and to the flesh and sleepeth in peace of conscience, and resteth, without struggling of vain thoughts, continually in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the Fifth Degree is when a man beginneth for to taste soothfastly the earnest of endless joy and is raised up to the beholding of heavenly things. Then feeleth and proveth he a glimmering of heavenly bliss, and then seeth he somewhat of the state of angels and of blessed soules and how all illuminations and all grace of charity and of goodness descendeth out of the Blessed Trinity into Jesus Christ's Manhood, and how the glorious Manhood

[1] Embracing.

of Christ pours out all Grace of Light and Love into Angels and into holy soules, and from them comes down unto us. Then is a man made able to revelations and contemplations of Jesus Christ.

Of Transforming the Soul into the Love of Christ

There is a manner of transforming the soul. It is when the soul is made meek and buxom to the will of God, so that it shapes itself in all that it may for to be like to Him, following His works for to transfigure and turn and have in itself Christ's Passion with suffering of all shames and reproofs as Christ suffered, so that it had rather be like to Christ through suffering of tribulation than to have all the might of the world.

Another way there is [for a man] to be transformed with God, and that is when his soul has then great feeling of Christ's love, and oft receiveth privy sweetness of His inspiration, and many great comforts and delights, but they are so sweet that they may not be thought, nor by words be shewed.

The third transforming is when Jesus Christ and a soul are so perfectly, so inseparably, and so accordably oned and bounden together that Christ is in the soul and the soul in Him, so fully as if they were but one spirit as S. Paul saith

"Whoso cleaveth to God, he is one spirit with Him." Then feeleth the soul high things and privy, of Jesus Christ and His Father and of His Holy Ghost, and it taketh such delectations of Christ's love that they may not fully be contained with thoughts of man's reason.

The first transformation is not sufficient for to rule and govern the affection of a man's heart, nor the second, for which[1] the fervour of affection when it has sett actually in God or in man is oft-times mightier, more eager and more masterful than is the wisdom of discretion of the soul, and therefore it is so, that thy love may drop and stumble and err either by much or by little. But by the third is wrought and gotten into the soul such a wisdom and such a deep knowing through that wonderful mingling and one-ing of Jesus Christ's light, lightening of the soul and of the soul lightened, that the soul is kenned[2] by this spirit of discretion, how it shall be ruled and governed through love that it has in Christ, and how it shall receive ghostly feelings and privy sweetness and delectations in Christ, and how it shall order and rule and measure the fervour of Christ's Love and the Visitations of His gracious Presence, so wisely and so privily and soberly, that it shall the more last safely and continually

[1] Because. [2] Kenned=taught.

in the feelings and in the ghostly comfort of Christ's Love; not scorning itself of other men neither by laughing nor by sobbing nor by no such token of the being of the body. Also by the same spirit of discretion the soul is kenned how wisely, how soberly, how chastely, how meekly, and how lowly it shall behave itself towards its even-Christians, man and woman, and how gladly and benignly for to condescend when it seemeth time.

And when he seeth that it is not for to condescend to them, it is wonder-stiff and strange, as a thing that might not be feared[1] nor changed nor bowed on any side. And the reason is this: God is in Himself unchangeable, and a soul is changeable of itself, but then, when the soul is oned to Him the more unchangeable it is and the less it has of unchangeableness.

For why? The wisdom and knowledge and firmness and light of discretion that the soul has by virtue of his oneness in love giveth the soul love and might that it may with peace fulfil the affection of love to God and his even-Christians without error or falsehood. And therefore he that never felt this gift of discretion and of wisdom and of grace in his heart it is speedful to him that he suffer not his affection fully to be bonded to no creature neither man nor woman singularly, for

[1] Frightened.

perils that may fall therefor, but to be plain and common to all, and not full homely to none, till he may, through this light of discretion, know by experience whose conversation and company he shall flee as hurtful to him and unprofitable, and whose conversation and affection he shall covet as to him easy and comfortable.

How Ghostly Love is often Turned into Fleshly Love

Therefore it is good for thee to have suspicion, and dread in thyself all men's love when it is privily and singularly sett unto any one person man or woman. For though it be first good and ghostly and beginneth in good and goodness nevertheless oft-times it falleth that it is afterwards bad and fleshly and endeth in the works of the fiend; from which love and perils, the armour of discretion gotten by the wounds of Christ in the manner aforesaid save us and all Christian men and women.

CHAPTER V

THE TIME OF CHANGE

THERE is still another little group of writers with whom we feel a closer kinship than with any of the others: perhaps because the world in which they lived was beginning to be like our own, and the questions and problems that perplex us now were beginning to trouble them. They were the men whose minds were uplifted by the wonders of the new learning, whose imaginations glowed and whose pulses beat more quickly as they caught a glimpse of the material world stretching out to undreamed-of distances before them.

There they stand, scholars and saints, the last of the "Merrie England" so soon to pass away, with the faeries, before "Reformation and Tudor Queens." Let us look well at them; we shall not soon look upon their like again. The light of the everlasting day is on their faces, as their steady eyes look through the mists of many evil years. Their lips are grave and their brows are level, though their eyes shine with mirth, a mirth that

never forsook them, even when block and axe, rope and gibbet and knife, rose dark and grim before them.

There is Warham, almost the last of those princely Archbishops of Canterbury, whose hospitality was as large as his heart, and who went on his last long journey with confidence that thirty crowns would be "enough provision for the way." Wise old man! with his "excellent faculty for making everyone merry at his table and ordering his discourse according to each man's peculiar temper," so that he could by a merry diversion end a deadly feud, as one stops the peevishness of a babe by holding up a shining trinket. Happy old man! whom God took to Himself just as the evil days dawned.

There is Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, friend and patroness of learning, aged now and frail, but "of sight and wisdom far surpassing the common rate of women; merciful and piteous unto such as were friendless and wrongly troubled; to God and His Church most obedient and tractable, seeking His honour and pleasure full busily." So says her confessor and dear friend, John Fisher, who left his professorial chair at Cambridge to shepherd the flock of Christ in Rochester. Gentle he is and serene, though the weight of a mitre rests on his head. He it was who

learned Greek as he was growing old, that he might study the Scriptures therein, and who died on the scaffold with words from his Greek Testament on his lips; who, at eighty years of age, was constrained to write to his persecutors from his dungeon in the Tower, for clothes to cover him, and books to comfort him, and a priest to confess him against the holy Christmas time that was coming.

There is Richard Whytford, firm as a rock in the singleness of judgment on which Sir Thomas More had relied in his valiant youth, and whom, years afterwards, Bedyll "handled" in vain "with fair words and foul" in the garden of Syon Monastery.

There is Colet, too, graver than the rest, perhaps, for he had a hard battle to wage against the foes of "impatience, luxury, and facetiousness" that ever pressed him hard, but with a beauty of countenance that his daily fasts and nightly vigils could not mar. He it is who ever "loved the simplicity and purity of little boys and girls, being wont to compare them to angels." He had prepared him a cell among the Carthusians of Shene, wherein to die. But he never used it; he also was taken away before the evil came.

And there beside him stands his spiritual son, saint and scholar and Chancellor of England, his arm thrown around the neck of his "dearest Erasmus" as they jest together like boys in the

pleasant Chelsea garden. He it is who, at the height of earthly power and prosperity, looks with steady and prophetic eye into the darkest earthly sunset that ever closed so bright a day. His son-in-law Roper stands by, "commending to him the happy state of this realm, that had so Catholic a prince that no heretic durst show his face, so learned and virtuous a clergy, so fair and learned a nobility, and so loving and obedient subjects, all in one faith agreeing together."

"Troth it is indeed, Son Roper," quoth he; "and yet I pray God that none of us, as high as we sit upon the mountains, treading heretics under our feet like ants, live not to see the day when we would gladly be at league and corporation with them, to let them have their churches quietly to themselves, so that they would be content to let us have ours quietly to ourselves. . . . I pray God, Son Roper, some of us live not until that day."

Now the clouds that he foresaw are gathering quickly, but again his merry laugh rings out, for the last time, in the garden that he loves: yet he has just returned from an interview with the Lords of the Council which has shut the door to him for ever on liberty and life. "Sir," says Roper, "I trust all is well since you are so merry."

"Wilt thou know, Son Roper, why I am merry? . . . In good sooth I rejoice me because I have

given the Devil so foul a fall this day, and have gone so far with those Lords as without great shame I could never go back again."

And there is that incomparable daughter of his ; for surely no daughter has ever loved a father more. There she stands, holding to her breast that dear head with which earth has now no treasure to compare, save perhaps his last bequest from his dungeon in the Tower—the shirt of hair she had been wont to wash for him, and the scourge of knotted cords of which she alone knew.

Ah, Margaret ! daughter of a noble confessor, it was surely a large portion of his spirit upon you which made it your crown of sorrow that he should for a moment think that you desired him to purchase the life that was the sun of the world to you, by the betrayal of his conscience !

How many are those faces shining through the mists of the evil years ! There is one with the coronet of a countess on her white hair. There are Mitred Abbots and Grey Friars : there are Benedictines and Dominicans, Brigittines, Carmelites, and Observants. And there too are the White Fathers of the Charterhouse, their faces lit with the unearthly light of their fires of torture. They had seen nothing " whereby they were moved to alter their opinion," in Bedyll's " books and annotations " ; they see nothing now, when the

death they have so long looked in the face is close at hand, and "as bridegrooms to their marriages" they go to their deaths.[1]

It is not without significance to us that one of the first printed books which comes to our notice, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, is "*A Full and Devoute Treatise of the Imitation and Following of the Blessed Life of our most merciful Saviour Criste*, compiled in Latin by the most worshipful Doctor Master John Gerson,[2] and trans-

[1] Bedyll to Cromwell (from MS. Cotton., Cleop: E, 6, fol. 252):—"Please it you to understand, that on Tuesday forthwith, upon my departure from you, I repaired to the Charterhouse, and had with me diverse bokes and annotations both of myne owne and others against the primacy of the bisshope of Rome, and also of Sainct Peter, declaring evidently the equalite of the apostelles by the law of God. And after long communication more than one hour and a half with the Vicar and procurater of the house, I left thoes bokes and annotations with thaim, that they should see the holy scriptures and doctors thereupon concerning the said maters and yesterday they sent me the said bokes and annotations againe home to my house by a servant of thairs, without any word or writing wherefor I sent to the procurater to come and speke with me, seeing I kept my bed bi reason of siknes and could not com to him. And at his comming, I demanded of him whether he and the Vicar and other of the seniors had seen or herd the said annotations or perused the hole of the bokes making most for the said maters. And he aunswered that the Vicar and he and nudigat had spent the tyme upon thaim tyl 9 or 10 of the clok at nyght and that they saw nothing in thaim wherby they wer moved to alter thair opinion."

[2] The *Imitation* first went out anonymously, and its authorship was attributed to the famous Chancellor of the University of Paris, whose mystical treatises had earned for him the title of "Doctor Christianissimus."

lated into English the year of our Lord 1502 by Master William Atkynson, Doctor of Divinity, at the special request and commandment of the full excellent Princess Margaret, moder to our Sovreign Lord Henry VII. and Countess of Richmond and Derby." The preface to the fourth part runs: "Here beginneth the Fourth Book of the Following of Jesus Christ and of the Contemning of the world. Imprynted at the commandment of the most excellent Princess Margaret. . . . And by the same Princess it was translated out of French into English in Forme and Manner ensuing."

The Lady Margaret

Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, who, as well as the fourth part of the *Imitation*, translated *The Mirror of God for the Sinful Soul*, was, says Bishop Fisher, "right studious in books, which she had in great number both in English and French, and for her exercise and the profit of others, she did translate divers matters of devotion out French into English."

It was in 1495 that Margaret Beaufort made the acquaintance of John Fisher, then senior proctor of the University of Cambridge. He had gone to town on business connected with his office, and happened to dine with the Countess. The noble

and beautiful friendship that sprang up between them was only ended, if such things can ever be said to end, by death.

After this the Lady Margaret spent much time in Cambridge, and it is in connection with one of her visits that a pleasant story is told. It is said that, standing by the window in her lodgings one day, she saw two students being taken to receive the whipping which was then the usual mode of punishment for serious breaches of University discipline. Too wise to interfere between the culprits and a probably well-deserved chastisement, she might still try to temper it with mercy; so, leaning out of the window, she beckoned to her the minister of justice, and said to him quietly, "Lente, lente!"

Richard Whytford

Whether this gentle and courteous lady in her visits to Cambridge ever met with Richard Whytford, who, when Fisher was president, was a young Fellow of Queen's, there is nothing to tell us. Probably she did, for Whytford was a friend of Erasmus and More, and even as a young man must have been too striking a personality to be easily passed by in the life of Cambridge. It was, most likely, while Erasmus was Professor of Greek that Whytford made his acquaintance, an acquaint-

ance that speedily ripened into friendship; for in 1497, when Whytford, having obtained leave from the University to travel, was in Paris with Lord Mountjoy, Erasmus wrote to him from the château of the Marquise de Vere as his "dear friend Richard," anticipating the time when they would meet and talk "with full mouths." In 1502 he was chaplain to Bishop Fox of Winchester; and it was then that, with a wisdom greater than his master's, he counselled young Thomas More against throwing himself on the king's mercy in order to avert the anger which his resistance to the royal demands in Parliament had aroused in the mind of Henry VII.

Whytford was still in the household of the Bishop of Winchester when Erasmus dedicated and sent to him, with a very characteristic letter, his declamation against Lucian's *Pro Tyrannicidia*. Sir Thomas More had also written a declamation, and Erasmus says: "Our declamations you will kindly so read as to think that I have been playing for a few days, not writing. I beg you also to compare More's with it, so as to be able to judge whether there be any difference of style between those, whom you used to affirm to be so alike in wit, manners, affections, and pursuits, that no pair of twins could be more so. Both of us, certainly, you equally love, to both equally dear.

Farewell, Richard, my dearest and most agreeable friend."

This was written on May the 1st, 1506. In 1507 Whytford was a Brigittine monk; for in that year, at the request of the Lady Abbess, the "wretch of Syon" wrote his first book, *A Daily Exercise and Experience of Death.*

Whether there was any external reason why he relinquished a worldly career that was full of promise and bright with friends, it is impossible to say. There is no indication in his writings of any break in his life. Neither do we know why he chose to become a monk of the Brigittine Order; for, unlike his friend Erasmus, Richard does not take his readers very much into his confidence.

The House of Syon was the only house of that order in England. The rule of the Brigittines was that of St Augustine according to the reform of St Bridget. The peculiar feature of their order was that each monastery was double, *i.e.* it consisted of a house of nuns and a house of monks; but, to all intents and purposes, the monks existed for the sake of the nuns, and the abbess was head of the whole establishment. Both monks and nuns were enclosed. The chapel consisted of two floors, the nuns using the upper and the monks the lower one. There were also two libraries, of which the catalogue is extant; from it we

learn that the library contained over 1450 volumes, of which so few escaped the ruthless destruction of the Dissolution that only six can now be traced. Evidently there was no lack of learning or devotion at Syon.

Dan James's *Orchard of Syon* has already been mentioned. Another famous book of Syon, *The Mirror of Our Lady*, which Dom Raynel ascribes to Whytford, is thought by Blunt to have been the work either of Thomas Gascoigne, compiler of the Theological Dictionary, who loved Syon and wrote for the nuns the lives of St Bridget and St Katherine; or of Thomas Ismaelita, a monk of Syon, whose *Speculum Humilitatis* and *Collectanea Miraculorum* are in the Bodleian Library. *The Mirror* was printed by Fawkes in 1530, "at the desire and instance of the worshipful Lady Abbess of the worshipful Monastery of Syon and the Reverend Father in God, the General Confessor of the same."

William Bande, of whom Whytford speaks as one of his "devout Brethren lately departed," wrote a treatise for the use of his house called *The Pilgrimage of Perfection*.

The House of Syon was founded by Henry V. on the banks of the Thames, about twelve miles from London. Across the river the Brigittine religious could see the Charterhouse of Shene, and

could hear the bells, that told the hours of prayer, answering their own. It was dissolved, with so many others, in 1539, and its abundant revenues went to enrich the king and his commissioners. The house itself went to the Crown, and was used as the prison of Katherine Howard. It was at Syon that the body of Henry VIII. rested on its way from Whitehall to Windsor; and it was here that the prophecy of Friar Peto that the dogs should lick his blood is said to have been fulfilled.

From this abode of peace, Whytford, for twenty-seven years, sent forth the writings which were the only indications the world had of his existence. During this time he published the *Sarum Martyrology as used at Syon*, the *Revelations of St Bridget*, the *Pomander of Prayer*, the *Book for Householders*, and the *Pype of Perfection*.

In 1534 the king's commissioners visited Syon. On December the 15th, 1536, Bedyll wrote to Cromwell from the Monastery:—"Here was on Tuesday Doctor Buttes and the Queen's almoner to convert Whytford and Littel; and on Wednesday, here was Doctor Aldrigge, Doctor Curwen, Doctor Bawghe and Doctor Morgan, sent by the King's Grace for that purpose; but they nothing profitted. I handled after that, Whytford, in the garden, both with fair words and foul, and showed him that by his obstinacy, he should

be brought to great shame of the world, for his religious life and for his . . . words to divers ladys in time of their confessions, wherby (I said) he might be the occasion that shrift shall be laid down through England: but he hath a brazen forehead that shameth at nothing. We would fayn know for advice what we shall doe with Whytford and Littel. . . . We have sequestered Whytford and Littel from hearing of the Ladys' [*i.e.* the nuns'] confessions."

Meantime Richard Whytford serenely continued his life and work. In 1537 he published a *Dialogue between a Ghostly Father and his Parochene or Ghostly Child for a due preparation to the Houseling.*

When Syon Monastery was dissolved, in 1539, Whytford's friendship with the Blunt family saved him from the fate of Father Reynolds, for it is evident that he did not consent to take the oath. He became chaplain to Charles, Lord Mountjoy, and in 1541 he published a *Treatise of Patience* and a *Word of Divers Hindrances and Lets to Perfection.* Two translations, one of St Chrysostom, the other of St Isidore, came from his pen about the same time. He must have been nearly, if not quite, ninety years old in 1558, the year in which his translation of the *Following of Christ* was published. He prefaces the translation by saying that " among many treatises which

have been put out both in Latin and English to seduce the simple people and to bring them from the unity of the Catholic Church into perverse and abominable errors, there have been also in time past many good treatises." Among which, he goes on, " there is one called the *Imitation or Following of Christ,* which, in my judgment, is excellent. I have read it over and over very many times, and the more I read the more I like it, and find profit to my soul's health. It teacheth the true mortification of the flesh to the spirit, according to the right sense of Holy Scripture and the doctrine of St Paul."

Commonly attributed to Richard Whytford is *Jesus' Psalter.* Written just before the floods of persecution burst over the Catholic Church in this land, it became a treasure and solace to English Catholics in their hour of trial. *Jesus' Psalter* is a mystical prayer corresponding in its three divisions to the three stages of the spiritual life. In the abbreviated form commonly in use, the extraordinary beauty of its rhythm and the significance of its structure are unfortunately lost.

Dean Colet

Just as Richard Whytford may be taken as an example of the devotional writers of the eve of the Reformation, so Colet may fitly represent the writers of the New Learning.

He will perhaps always be remembered by the great school he founded and loved best of all earthly things. There is something extraordinarily attractive in the simple humility of the travelled *littérateur*, the finished classicist, the friend of all the great English and most of the foreign scholars, who set himself the task of writing an elementary Latin Grammar "for the children of the new school of Paules," not thinking that he could say "anything better than had been said before, but to put these parts" (*i.e.* the seven parts of grammar) "in a clear order . . . and to make them a little more easy to young wits than they were before. Judging that nothing may be too soft or too familiar for little children, especially learning a tongue to them all strange."

Colet sent his Grammar to William Lily, the first high master of St Paul's School, his own friend and the friend of Sir Thomas More, with a Latin dedication, which runs thus: "Nothing has been so near my heart at this time as that the little ones of Christ should prosper under thy care both in learning and good living; and if thou strive to attain this thou wilt earn the reward of Jesus, the Guardian of the school, and thou wilt make me very happy."

Colet's happiness was centred in his school and

his friends; his public life was neither happy nor successful.

He set himself to reform the Chapter of St Paul's, but met with great opposition from the members thereof, and failed to gain the support of his Bishop. He was so much disliked and misunderstood that a charge of heresy was brought against him. It was, from the frivolousness of its points, so evidently vexatious, that it was quashed by the archbishop. Probably, however, the cause of his troubles lay in his own temper, the difficulty of which even his friends fully appreciated. More writes to Erasmus: "He is apt, as you know, to resist persuasion for the sake of a dispute, even if one wants him to do the very thing to which he is himself much inclined."

Evidently Colet's bad understanding with his bishop lasted to the end of his life. Five years before his death he wrote to Erasmus at Basel: "All your friends here are well. My Lord of Canterbury is as sweet as ever. He of Lincoln now reigns as archbishop of York. He of London continues to harass me. I think daily of my retreat and hiding place among the Carthusians. Our nest is nearly finished. When you come back to us you will, as far as I can guess, find me dead to the world."

The "nest" was never used by its builder;

he who reigned "as archbishop of York" was glad in a little while to hide himself there; while the scholarly Dean, with his loving heart and difficult temper, leaving to a friend his "bed at the Charterhouse, with mattress and blankets to the same bed belonging," was taken from his "harassing" bishop and from the evil to come, to a place where peace was more assured than even among the White Fathers of Shene.

Colet's *Monitions to a Godly Man*, his *Petycions of the Lord's Prayer*, and his *Precepts of Lyving for the Boys of St Paul's School* are practically his only popular works. He preached every Sunday at St Paul's, and many Lents at the Court; but of all his sermons, his famous *Oratio ad Clerum in Convocatione* has alone come down to us.

His other works—*i.e.* his lectures on the Epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians, his commentaries on Ecclesiastes and on the Hierarchies of Dionysius, and his treatise on the Sacraments of the Church—contain many passages of extraordinary beauty; but Colet looks at the world from an angle which is unattainable by the majority of men. His mind was singularly daring, and he was intellectually interested in all points of view. The great House of Stepney once harboured Henry Cornelius Agrippa. He was "no stranger to Plato and Plotinus" and the German mystics;

but none of the shoals and currents of his time could draw him away from the Truth.

"Ah, Erasmus," he says, in a letter written in 1517, two years before his death, "of books and knowledge there is no end, but there is nothing better for this short term of ours, than that we should live a pure and holy life, and daily do our best to be cleansed and enlightened and so to realise that which is promised by those Pythagorean and Cabalistical ideas of Reuchlin, but what in my judgment will never be attained but by the ardent love and imitation of Jesus. Wherefore it is my most ardent wish that, leaving all indirect courses, we may proceed by a direct method to the Truth."

His personality is fascinating by reason of its very aloofness, and the men of his time did not fail to find it so. Many and divers were the guests who were wont to share the sparing meal which the Deanery table afforded. Of his beloved Archbishop and the Bishop of Rochester, of Erasmus and of his spiritual son Sir Thomas More we know. But there are others. We have already met William Lily, the first high master of his school, with whom, in his youth, Sir Thomas More contemplated entering the priesthood. There was also Abbot Charnock of St Mary's, Cambridge, at whose table he and Erasmus had enjoyed many a wordy war. There was, too, that Benedictine

scholar Richard Kidderminster, who at twenty-two years of age became president of Winchcombe Lodgings, and under whose care as abbot, in later years, the monastery of Winchcombe itself became "quamsi fuisset altera nova Universitas," so entirely were the monks devoted to sacred learning. But that which "specially delighted this Abbot's heart, was the strict observance of rule, the brotherly love, the unity and concord of his cloister, in which it was unsurpassed by any House in England."

Richard Kidderminster wrote a history of his beloved monastery, and a treatise against Luther. In the second year of Henry VIII., he preached a sermon at Paul's Cross against a Bill that had been brought into Parliament for exempting from benefit of clergy all religious orders except bishops, priests, and deacons. Richard said that the Bill was "contrary to the law of God and the liberty of Holy Church, and that all assenting to it, had by so doing incurred the censure of Holy Church."

Did the Abbot of Winchcombe dine with his friend John Colet on the day of the sermon, and did their opinions on the Bill agree ?

It is very pleasant to linger in the deanery hall and to watch that group gathered round the hospitable and frugal table. It is a group that contains all that is ripest in English scholarship,

and all that is best in English religious life. There is Doctor Linacre, doctor of medicine of the University of Padua, late Court physician, and now a priest. There is Grocyn, too, who had gone from Oxford, and Selling, who had left his Benedictine cloister at Canterbury to study Greek in Italy; whence both had returned, not less humble and devout Christians for all the learning they had gathered there; for Selling had come back with his Greek manuscripts to make his Canterbury monastery a house of studies; and Grocyn, who had learned his Greek from the famous Chalcondyles, had returned to take his doctor's degree in theology, and was "almost superstitiously observant of ecclesiastical custom."

Selling's friend too, Langton, Bishop of Winchester, sits there with his favourite pupil Robert Pace, whom he had sent from his own divinity school to study in Rome and Padua, and maintained there, with the help of Cuthbert Tunstall, till his studies were finished.

Perhaps it seemed to these men, some bishops and priests and monks, all scholars and loyal sons of the Church, that the ancient prophecies were again being fulfilled, and that the riches of the ages were being brought to the feet of the Church. Their age, like the ages of the past, had its offering to make; and in time to come men would re-

member how she had brought the wisdom of the East, the learning of Greece, and the lands of America to add to the treasures of the City of God. Was it thus they spoke, with bright hopes and high courage, little knowing what the future held ?

RICHARD WHYTFORD

1. The Duties of the Master of a House
2. Witchcraft
3. The Correction of Children
4. The Practice of Confession
5. The Life of Perfection and
6. The Religious Life
7. The Contemplative Life

} From "The Pype of Perfection"

8. The Spiritual Glasse of the Soul

THE DUTIES OF A MASTER OF A HOUSE[1]

HOWBEIT we think it not sufficient nor enough for you to live well yourselfe, but that all other Christians also live the better for you, and by your example, especially those that you have in charge and governance, that is to say your children and servants. And me seemeth it should also be a good pastyme and most merytorious for you that can rede, to gather your neighbours about you on the holy day, specially the young sort, and rede to them this pore lesson. For therein are such things as they are bound to know or can say, that is the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Crede, with such other things as do follow. I would therefore you should begin with them betimes in youth as soon as they can speak. For it is an old saying: "The pot or vessell shall ever savour or smell of the thing wherewith it is first seasoned." And your English proverb sayeth: "That the young cock croweth as he doth hear and learn of the old." You may in youth teach them what ye will and that

[1] From *A Werke for Householders*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1553.

shall they longest keep and remember. . . . Unto some crafts and occupations a certain age is required in children, but vertue and vice may be lerned in every age. See therefore that in any wise you let them use no company but good and vertuous.

And as soon as they can speak let them first learn to serve God and to say the Pater Noster, Ave, and Crede as I sayd before. And not only your children, but also see you prove that all your servants, what age so ever they be of, can say the same. And therefore I have advised many persons, and have now to counsel you that in every meal, dinner or souper, one person should with loud voice say thus :—

(Here follows the " Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Crede and commandments with explanations.)

ON WITCHCRAFT

And here good and devote Christians be well ware and warne all yours of these superstitions, witchcrafts and charms that have been much used and do deceive many persons, that for the unlawful love unto the health of their bodies, or of their children or beastes, or other goods lost or stolen will go seek wise men or wise women for so they do call the devil's proctors that do use such witchcraft, and put themselves subject unto the false god the devil and his ceremonies, to get health unlawfully

by the means of that witchcraft, forbidden by the Church under pain of cursing. And yet the simple people do suppose and ween they do nothing offend therein. For I have heard them say full often myself: "Sir, we mean well, we do believe well, and we think it a good and charitable dede to heal a sick person or a sick beast." And troth they say; but it is neither good nor charitable to heal them by unlawful means. And surely that means is unlawful. For good reason will admit that no sore nor sickness may be healed but either by nature, or by medecine, or by miracle. If a finger be cutte, or a small surfeit taken, nature in a whyle heals the person. But in all greivous diseases medecine is the common means of health; but sure are they that such charms or witchcrafts are no medecines, for then should they heal as well by one person as by another. And no man believeth they are miracles, ergo they must needs be the devil's craft, that to deceive the simple persons doth heal some and teacheth the way unlawful to bring them into his danger. . . .

But yet some have said to me: "Sir, how may this charm be evil or amyss when all things are good, as by example:—The charmer is a good man or good woman and taketh him a piece of white bread, and saith over that bread nothing, but only the Pater Noster, and maketh a cross upon the

bread; which things be all good. Then doth he nothing else but lay the piece of bread into the tooth, the sore or disease and so is the person healed. "How may this be evil now?" they say. I say again it is evil and damnable because the faith and belief of the whole matter resteth in the application of the cross, which hath no natural operation but is a ceremony unlawful. For although things here be good yet do they nothing avail without that ceremony, and so is all a charm and unlawful and nought.

THE CORRECTION OF CHILDREN

. . . Then say I beware of the lyers, for all common lyers are the devil's children, and do follow theyr father the devyle, whose property and natural disposition is to lye. I can well grant that you forgive and pardon them that do steal, pick, or do leechery for once or twice, and labour and looke for their recovery and amendment, but in no wise can I grant that you pardon the lyers, but ever forthwith as you would cure the sodeyn[1] pestylence so correct and punish the lye.

Wherefore I have set out here a pretty lesson which I pray you teach your children and every childe that cometh into your company; you shall I trust do much good thereby.

[1] Sudden.

" If I lye, backbite or steal
If I will curse, scorn, mock or swear,
If I chide, fight, strive or threate,
Then am I worthy to be bete.
Good mother or maystres[1] myne,
If any of these nine
I trespass to your knowynge ;
With a newe rodde and a fyne
Erly naked before I dyne,
Amende me with a scourgynge."

And then I pray you fulfil their petition and request, and think it not cruelly but mercyfully done. For the wise man saith, " Who spareth the rodde hateth the chylde." And in another place : " If thou have chyldren," saith he, " correct them betime and hold them under while they be young." For daily practice doth show unto you that if you powder your flesh while it is new and sweet, it will continue good meat, but if it smell before it be powdered, all the salt you have shall never make it seasonable. Powder your children therefore betimes, and then you love them and shall have comfort of them. . . .

But whoso doeth the correction, whether it be in lashes or wordes, let it be done with the charity of our Lord, and with a mild and soft spirit, that ever it be done for the reformation of the person

[1] Mistress.

rather than for the revenging of the defaut ; and therefore should you never do any manner of correction while you are vexed, chafed, troubled, wroth or angry for any cause ; but rather for that time defer the correction, and another time by good deliberation take the person a part, or if the trespass be openly known, then do it openly, that all the lookers thereupon may be warned thereby ; and give them a good lesson before the correction, and tell them that you do this correction against your mynde, compelled thereunto by conscience and require them to put you no more to such labour and pain. " For if you do," say you, " you must suffer part of the pain with me, and therefore shall you now have experience and proof what pain it is unto us both." And then pay truly, and afterwards forthwith forgive them clearly and gentylly, so that they do so no more. And in doing this correction, you may edify and reprove the persons, and also have merit and thanks of our Lord.

When on the contrary you chide, bawle, curse, and with ungodly words rebuke or strike with hastiness to revenge your own cause or appetite, you shall render the persons more stubborn and stiff-hearted and engender in them a hatred towards you. And not only lose your merite, but also deserve pain, and the punishment of God. Whereas

the other correction, done by soberness shall cause the persons to have you in a reverend dread, and also to love you, and hereafter to bless you and pray for you.

OF CONFESSION

I beseech you give no credence to those false heretics, that do deprave and set nought by confession, nor by this holy Sacrament of Penance; for I assure you those persons, what-so-ever they be, that after their baptism and chrystendom have done any deadly synne can never be in the state of salvation without the faith and will of confession. For Almighty God, in every law did require confession, and provoke every trespasser thereunto, as of our fyrst parentes Adam and Eve in paradise, which confession if they had meekly made, they and all we should have suffered the less pain.

In the old law special oblations and sacrifice were appointed openly by the priest to be done for such sins among the people, that were privy and unknown to all other persons except only the self trespassers.

Whereby it must needs be troth that they were confessed thereof unto the priests. When any person also was suspect of leprosy, the judgment and determination thereof, remained by the ordinance of the law, unto the priest. Whych thing

was a plain figure of the Sacrament of Penance and Confession. And our Saviour sayd he came not to brake the law, but rather to accomplish and fulfil the law. And so he did ratify and confirm that law when he sent the lepers that he cured and healed unto the priests. And in any cure that he did upon sick persons he expressed mystically confession, in that he caused them to shew their disease before they were cured.

And St Peter, his Vicar, after his Ascension, did require confession of a man called Ananias and of his wife called Saphira, as appeareth in holy Scripture, of a deadly sin which he, by the revelation of God, knew they had done, and because they would not make confession thereof, they were both striken to death with the vengeance of God.

Our Mother holy Church therefore, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, ordeyned that every person that doth commit or do any deadly sin in work, word or by full deliberate consent in thought, must needly, if they will be saved, be confessed thereof unto a priest. Syth then all Christian people have received and used the same so many hundred years, take you that use and custom for sufficient authority to follow the same and to put all manner of contrary opinion clean out of mynde, and in no wise hear speak or talk thereof.

THE PYPE OR TONNE OF PERFECTION

Unto the Devout Readers

This worke was written years ago. And now thought necessarie to be sent forth; bycause of these new fangled persones, whiche in dede be heretyckes, all though they wyll not so be called, yet do write newe oppinions and not only deprave all religious that commonly be called by that name religious. But also do corrupt the high religion of all religions, the new testament of Christe against whom they fare. Here is somewhat spoken in our common tongue, that all may knowe all their false and subtyll deceites, and the

rather beware of them. I beseeche
you applie all unto the best, and
I most meekly do submitte
myselfe unto charitable
correction. And that
is the veray and
only cause, as
oft we have
showed
that we
do.

Sette forth our name
The olde wretched brother
of Syon: RICHARD WHYTFORD.

The Pype of Perfection was published in 1532. It is a quaint allegory of the Religious Life:—

"The life and manner of lives in perfection is much like unto a pleasant, precious and holsome wine, contayned, preserved and kept in a pype or tonne, which vessel is commonly made of planed bordes; and these bordes compassed about and bound fast with hoops; and yet these hoops bound and made fast with small wykers; so that if the wykers by any chance be losed or broken the hoops forthwith do fly or start off. . . . So doth the wine flow out and perish. The lyke manner is it of this life of perfection, which is closed and kept most surely in Religion.

"The bordes are the three monastic vows.

"The hoops are the counsels of Holy Doctors.

"The wykers are the ceremonies of Religion."

The Life of Perfection

. . . And so after that manner is nothing perfecte, but only God Himself, nor any life or state of living is so, or under the forme perfect, but His life alone. In other ways a thynge is called perfect unto the whiche nothing may be added or belonging unto that thing, that is to say, that hath all things and lacketh nothing that shoulde apperteyn unto the natural perfection of that thinge.

And under this form is every person of soul

and body perfect man. But in this manner of perfection are many degrees. . . . All those by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Saviour, receiving his faith, believing and baptised, are eftsoons born and renewed unto a perfect lyfe or a perfect state of living. . . .

This state of living is that life of perfection that we meant and spake of, signified by the dolce sweet and precious wine to be preserved in our said vessel of Religion. For although all Christians are put once in this state, yet is not that state continually kepte in all them. And although this state and lyfe of perfection may be well kepte and preserved in many other vessels, that is in many degrees of persons, yet as I said, it is not so surely kept of any sort, as by religious persons. And yet notwithstanding I do not deny but that some persons in every degree of the people, as some in wedlock, some in wifehood, some in virginity among the laity and among the clergy, some, I say, may, and do preserve and keep and continue the said state and life of perfection as well as some and in as perfect manner as any religious persons do. But yet as I have often said there is none of these degrees that throughout the whole degree, do keep it as well as religious persons. Therefore I said that this vessell is most apte and most convenient to preserve this precious wine of the life or state

of perfection. When I say most convenient I do not deny other degrees to be convenient and very convenient.

And yet in that state of Baptism duly kept are degrees of perfection meritorious. That may be proved by the gospells, for our Savyour himself, in his acts for our instruction, did not always keep one manner or one forme, but sometime he shewed himself as a pèrson universal, and did accompany himself and be familiar in eating and drinking, speaking and talking with persons of low degree,—and sometime he shewed himself of high and singular perfection in fasting forty days in prayer, and specially in his transfiguration.

In the which those persons that were present, were so ravished that they would have dwelled still there and never have descended to the life they used before ; and yet was that life most happy and gracious wherein they lived with their master, and much more perfect than was the life of many other good and devout persons. So then it appeareth, that in the pure state of Christianity are diverse degrees of perfection. And, as it were, two manner of lives distinct and diverse, and yet both of high perfection, which is commonly called the Life active and the Life contemplative. . . .

And so in our business of this poor labour concluded and ended after our poor understanding

and rude manner. I beseech you to applie all unto the best, and accept my goodwill and mynde in our Lord God and most swete Savyour Jesu Christ, who preserve you all in his grace and mercy. AMEN.

And of your charity to pray for the said wretched brother of Syon.

RICHARD WHYTFORDE.

ON CONTEMPLATION

This terme contemplation in playne English is as much as to say, a diligent beholding or lookynge that doth appertain and belong rather unto the soule or mynde than unto any bodily sight. As when a person would (for very fervent devotion and desire of our Lord) give and apply himself to sequestere, and doth withdraw and put away all his herte and mynde from all bodily and worldly thynges and to fix or fasten the same upon thynges celestial and heavenly beholding, and looking thereupon with the eye or sight of the soule or mind by cogitations, thought, meditation or remembrance.

And because this thynge may be done by diverse manners and divers degrees of fervour and desire, divers doctors and contemplative persons have set forth in writing their myndes therein, some in English and more in Latin, and I doubt not in all other tongues and languages.

Among the which I am required to translate one little worke of a great clerke called Master John Gerson, which worke cannot be made ready to be printed at this time—*Vale in Christo.*

Spiritual Glasse of the Soul

And it is right good and profitable to every person often to look upon it.

. . . . .

Read distinctly.
Pray devoutly.
Sigh deeply.
Suffer patiently.
Meek you lowly.
Give no sentence hastily.
Speake but rathe[1] and that truly.
Prevent your speech discretely.
Do your deeds in charity.
Temptations resist strongly ; break his head shortly.
Weep bitterly.
Have compassion tenderly.
Do good works busily.
Love perseverantly.
Love heartily. Love faithfully.
Love God alonely. And all others for Him charitably.

[1] Rathe = seldom.

Love in adversity. Love in prosperity.
Think always of Love; for Love is none other than God Himself.
Thus to love bringeth the lover to Love without end.

AMEN.

DEAN COLET

1. Precepts of Living, and Prayers for the Boys of St Paul's School
2. On the Church
3. On the Sacraments
4. The Dignity of the Rulers, and especially the Pope
5. Tradition
6. Of Priesthood

Prayers used by Sir Thomas More in the Tower

From the St Paul's School Statutes in Mercers' Hall

"There shall also be in this schoole a Priest, that daily, as he can be disposed, shall sing Mass in the Chapel of the schole, and pray for the children to prosper in good lyff and in good literature to the Honour of God and our Lorde Christ Jesu. At his Mass when the bell of the schole shall knyll to sacring therein all the children in the schole kneeling in theyr settes shall with lift up handes, pray in the tyme of Sacring. After the Sacring, whereon the bell knileth ageyn they shall sitt down ageyn to their learning."

How long is it since the children of Paul's "knelt in their seats" and lifted their hands "to pray" at the Sacring?

PRECEPTS OF LYVINGE

Fear God.
Love God.
Desire to be with Him.
Serve Him daily with some prayer.
Bridle the affections of thy mynde.
Subdue thy sensual appetites.
Thrust down pride.

Refrain thy wrath.
Forget trespasses.
Believe and trust in Christ.
Worship Him, and His Mother Mary.
Call often for Grace of the Holy Spirit.
Love peace and quiet.
Think of Death.
Dread the Judgement of God.
Trust in God's Mercy.
Be always well occupied.
Lose no time.
Stande in grace.
Forgive gladly.
Chastise thy body.
Be sober of thy mouth.
Use honest company.
Beware of riot.
Dispense measurably.
Flee dishonesty.
Be true in worde and deed.
Reverence thine elders.
Obey thy superiors.
Be benign and loving to thine inferiors.
Love all men in God.
Falling down, despair not; ever take a fresh new purpose. Persevere constantly.
Use often Confession.
Wash clene.
Sorrow for thy sinnes.
Ask often mercy.
Be no sluggard.
Awake quickly.
Enrich thee with virtue.
Learn diligently.
Teach that thou hast learned lovingly.
Be fellow to thy equals.
Be sober of meat and drink.
Be sober in talking.
Flee swearing.
Flee foul language.
Love cleanness and chastity.
By this way thou shalt come to Grace, and to Glory. AMEN.

A PRAYER TO OUR LADY

Holy Mary, Virgin, and Mother of Jesus, pray Thy Son[1] that this school may daily progress in Him, so that all the boys here may learn Him, and become learned in Him, until at length they become perfect sons of God through Him.

And Thou also most loving Jesus pray Thy Father and our Father that by the Grace of His Spirit He may make us, His little sons, so to learn Thee O Jesus and to imitate Thee in this world, that we may happily reign together with Thee in the world to come. AMEN.

A LITTLE PRAYER TO THE BOY JESUS, THE GUARDIAN OF THE SCHOOL

My sweetest Lord Jesus, Who when a boy of twelve years old, so reasoned among the doctors in the Temple at Jerusalem, that they all were amazed and wondered at Thy surpassing wisdom, I beseech Thee, that in this Thy school, where Thou art Guardian and Patron, I may daily so learn both letters and wisdom that I may be able, first of all to know Thee O Jesu, Who art Thyself the True Wisdom, and then knowing Thee, to worship and imitate Thee, and in this short life so to walk in the way of Thy Doctrine, following Thy Foot-

[1] "Age cum filio tuo."

steps, that by the way Thou Thyself hast attained, I too, when I depart this life, may by Thy Grace attain to some portion of that glory. AMEN.

Extracts from Colet's Writings

THE CHURCH

High above the vale of this world's misery it stands forth in Christ, on a hill that cannot be hid; seeing above it the sky and glittering stars, seeing beneath it the earth with the dwellers thereon in gloom and darkness. There meantime between earth and Heaven, on the heights of Christ's lofty mountain, stands the Church breathing the pure and vital air of the Spirit of God; and seeing men daily journeying towards it, in the strength of the same Christ, and in the purification of themselves by the Divine Fire; men, who when they have at length become thoroughly simple, pure and one in it, are then made clear and luminous by the light of the Divine Sun and are perfected by the crowning Love of God in Christ in Heaven.

THE SACRAMENTS OF PURIFICATION, ILLUMINATION, AND UNIFICATION

OF HOLY BAPTISM

The object of our Christian Religion is nothing else than our becoming like God. . . . Whilst we

were altogether unlike God, it pleased the good God to be like men that He might render man like God. . . .

They truly rise again, who have put off their sins in the washing of regeneration in the Death of Christ, walk with perseverance unto the end, in the white robe of righteousness without spot; and who baffle not the anointing of Confirmation, which is finally used by the Bishop to signify that a man is confirmed in grace and perfected. To one who is thus perfected as a member of Christ in his kind, for his union with the Body and his nourishment as a member, the Sacred Food of the Eucharist is administered; by which it is understood that he is both in the Body and is fed and nourished spiritually in that Body. No one is perfectly a member of Christ unless he has been a partaker of the Holy Communion and the Food of Life, by participation of which he grows to be one with the Body.

In the Early Church all who were baptised, and at the same time confirmed by the Holy Anointing, were invited without delay to the Communion of the Heavenly Food.

(*From the Treatises on the Hierarchies of Dionysius.*)

Of the Holy Eucharist

The washing of hands on the part of the Bishop and priests signifies that they are wholly clean and need no washing save as regards their extremities. . . . The fingers are washed that if any taint of sin remains, however slight, it may be wholly scoured away and that the Bishop and those with him may in all sweetness and purity enter on the most holy rites, so as purely and devoutly to conduct and complete the Divine office in the Sacrament.

And here let any priest observe by that Sacrament of washing how clean, how scoured, how fresh he ought to be, who would handle the Heavenly Mysteries and especially the Sacrament of the Lord's Body ; how such ought to be so washed and scoured and polished inwardly as that not so much as a shadow be left on the mind, whereby the incoming light might be in any wise obscured ; and that not a trace of sin remain to prevent God from walking in the Temple of our minds. Oh priests ! Oh priesthood ! Oh the detestable boldness of wicked man in this our generation ! Oh the abominable impiety of those miserable priests of whom this age of ours contains a great multitude ; who fear not to rush from the bosom of some foul harlot into the temple of the Church, to the Altar of Christ, to the Mysteries of God.

(*De Sacramentis Ecclesiæ.*)

THE DIGNITY OF A BISHOP, AND ESPECIALLY OF THE POPE

Hence we may see how high, how exalted, how wholly conversant in Heaven the Bishop should be, he especially, who is the highest, whom we call the Pope, that what by his authority he diffuses over the Church, quickening it to life eternal, he may draw from God.

TRADITION

These books [*i.e.* the Holy Scriptures] were placed by the authorities of the Early Church among the sacred and canonical writings and were approved with all reverence. To these were added a more hidden system of wisdom not committed to writing by the Apostles, but sacredly and religiously kept in their hearts and bosoms. This did they, as worthy, learn from Jesus Christ and afterwards handed down only to those that were worthy and like themselves.

For ordinances commonly practised in the Church and transmitted from the Apostles themselves to us, were not committed to writing but were entrusted to the practising of the common sort, whilst the reasons of these were retained only by the chief men in the Church.

(*Ecclesiastical Hierarchies.*)

OF PRIESTHOOD (THE PRIESTHOOD OF ANGELS)

From God the Father, through the Son, with the Holy Spirit, all things are made and fulfil themselves.

From the Most Holy Trinity is all consecration—that is to say from God, through the Son with the Holy Spirit. God truly is the Priest from Whom every Priest in Heaven and Earth is named. In God all things are true ; outside God is an imitation of God. In God Who is eternal all things are eternal. The Fatherhood and Sonship and Love and Priesthood are eternal.

First was established that Sacrament by which all other Sacraments are established ; it was that which was called Order and Priesthood. In the beginning, Himself being both Priest and Order, He consecrated and openly bound in a Sacrament those most happy spirits that in Him, the Author of their Orders, in holy Order they might fight together. For all priesthood is warfare in God.

There are besides in spiritual natures all the remaining Sacraments, but very often in spiritual and angelic manner. Matrimony, Penance, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Extreme Unction.[1]

(*Ecclesiastical Hierarchies.*)

[1] The order in which the Sacraments are given is to be noted ; Colet wrote before the Council of Trent had fixed them in the order in which we now have them.

Note.—The above extracts serve to show the intensely mystical cast of Colet's mind. For him all things on earth are but a reflection of the things which are eternal in the Heavens.

DEVOUT PRAYER AND GHOSTLY MEDITATIONS

Made and Collected also by the said Sir Thomas More whiles he was Prisoner in the Tower of London

O glorious God, all sinful feare, all sinful sorrow and pensiveness, all sinful hope, all sinful mirth and gladness take from me. And on the other side concerning such fear, such heaviness, such consolation, comfort and gladness as shall be profitable to my soul.

"Fac mecum secundum magnam bonitatem tuam, Domine."

Good Lord give me thy grace in all my fear and agony to have recourse to that great fear and wonderful agony that thou my sweet Saviour hadst at the Mount of Olives before thy most bitter Passion and in the meditation thereof to conceive ghostly comfort and consolation profitable for my soul. . . .

Give me, good Lord, a longing to be with Thee, not for the avoiding of the calamities of this wretched world, nor so much for avoiding the pains of Purga-

tory, nor of the pains of Hell neither, nor so much for the attaining of the joys of Heaven in respect of mine own commodity as even for a very love to Thee.

And pardon me good Lord that I am so bold to ask so high petitions being so vile. A sinful wretch and so unworthy to obtain the lowest; and yet good Lord such things be as I am bound to wish for and should be nearer the effectual desire of them if my manifold sins were not the let.

Give me grace, O Lord:—

To set the world at nought.
To set my mind fast upon Thee.
To be content to be solitary.
Little by little utterly to cast off the world.
And rid my mind of all the business thereof.
Not to long to hear of any worldly things.
To humble and meek myself under the mighty hand of God;
To bewail my sins past.
Gladly to bear my purgatory here;
To bear the Cross with Christ;
To have ever before mine eye my death that is ever at hand.
To pray for pardon before the Judge come.
Of worldly substance, friends, liberty, life
And all, to set the loss at right nought for the winning of Christ.

PART II

Containing Parts of Six Mystical Treatises

1. OF THE THREE DEGREES OF PRAYER
   WALTER HYLTON
   (From the "Scala Perfectionis.")
2. OF GHOSTLY LOVE — WALTER HYLTON
3. A TREATISE ON THE MIXED LIFE
   WALTER HYLTON
4. PURGATORY AND HEAVEN — RICHARD ROLLE
   (From "A Treatise of Ghostly Battle.")
5. PART OF THE REVELATION OF ST KATHERINE, from "THE GARDEN OF SYON"
6. FROM THE TREATISE "DE PASSIONE CHRISTI" — ST BONAVENTURA

WALTER HYLTON

OF THE THREE DEGREES OF PRAYER[1]

That certain Prayers of speech ordained by God and Holy Church were left unto them that be bounden and ordained thereto and all that giveth them newly to Devotion.

Now as to that other, for to know what prayer were best to use I shall say as methinketh you shall understand. The first prayer of speech made specially of God is the Pater Noster. And made also more generally by the ordination of Holy Church is Matins, Hours and Evensong; and also made by devout men to other special saints, as to our Lord and to our Lady and to other saints.

Unto this manner of Prayer that is called vocal methinketh that all religious both by custom and rule are bounden for to say Matins and Evensong. I hold it most speedful for to say them also devoutly as ye may, for when thou sayest the Matins thou sayest the Pater Noster. Principally, and more for to stir thee to more devotion, it was

[1] From the *Scala Perfectionis*. MS. Rawlinson, C. 285.

ordained also for to say psalms and such other that had been made by the Holy Ghost as the Pater Noster is. Therefore thou shalt not say them hastily or recklessly as thou wert ilk paid that thou art bound to say them, but thou shalt gather thine affection and thy thought for to say them more devoutly than any other special prayer of devotion, knowing forsooth that it is a prayer of Holy Church, that there is no prayer so profitable to thee which is vocal, commonly so to use as is that; and so shalt thou put away all thy sloth [1] and by the Grace of God thou shalt turn all thy mind into good will and thy bond into great freedom, that it shall no letting be of ghostly occupation. After this thou mayest, if thou wilt, say other, as the Pater Noster and such other as thou findest most savour and most ghostly comfort in. This manner of prayer is speedful to ilk a man in the beginning of his conversion for to use most of any other ghostly occupation. For a man in the beginning is harassed and beset, if he have no more grace, and cannot think ghostly things in meditation. For the soul is not yet cleansed from all old sins. And therefore I hold it is most speedful for to use this manner of prayer as the Pater Noster and the Ave and to read upon the Psalter. For he that cannot run lightly by

[1] Heaviness (Harleian MSS.).

ghostly prayer, for his feet in walking and lifting are heavy from sin, him needs to have a secure staff to hold by. This staff is special prayer of speech ordained by Holy Church of God in help of man's soul by the which prayer the soul of a fleshly man that is always falling down into worldly thoughts and fleshly affections shall be lifted up on high, holden by it as by a staff, fed with sweet words of prayer, as a child with milk, and upheld by it that he fall not in error.

For in this manner of prayer is no deceit whoso will stedfastly and meekly travel therein.

What Peril it is to Men that, in the beginning of turning to God, leave the Common Prayer ordained by Holy Church and give themselves to Meditation.

Then may you by this see that these men if any be which at the beginning of their conversion or soon after when they have felt a little of ghostly comfort either in devotion or in working and are not stably set therein, they leave all vocal prayer and other bodily exercises and give themselves wholly to meditation; they are not wise. They imagine and think of ghostly things upon their own wit and following their bodily feelings and have not received grace thereto and therefore they by indiscretion oftimes outrun their wit, and

oftimes their bodily strength, and so they fall into fantasy and singular conceits and into errors and let the Grace that God gives them, by these vanities. The cause of all this is a pure pride and presumption of themselves. When they have felt a little grace, they think that it is so much passing others, that they fall into vain glory and so loose it. If they wist how little it were that they feel of that which God gives or may give they would be ashamed for to speak thereof. But it were a great meed. Of this manner of prayer speaketh David in this Psalm that saith thus: "Voce mea ad Deum clamavi, voce mea ad Dominum deprecatus sum." David the prophet for to strengthen other men for to pray both with heart and with mouth says: "With my voice I cried to God and with my spirit besought the Lord."

The Second Manner of Prayer

The second manner of prayer is by speech but it is by no special certain saying. And this is when a man or a woman feeleth grace of devotion by the gift of God, and in his devotion speaketh to God as if he were bodily in His Presence, with such words as accordeth most to his stirring for the time, and as it cometh to his mind, after sundry regards the which he feeleth in his heart, of rehearsing his sins and his wretchedness, of the

malice and slights of his enemies, or else the goodness and the mercy of God and what he conceiveth with desire of heart and with speech of his mouth to our Lord for succour and help; as a man that were in peril among his enemies or else a man in sickness showing his wound to God, as to a leech, saying this as David says: "Eripe me de inimicis meis Deus meus"—"O Lord deliver me from my enemies." So he is stirred for to say "Sana animam meam quia peccavi tibi"—"O Lord deliver my soul for I have sinned against Thee," or else other as comes to mind. And also him thinks so much goodness and grace and mercy to God that him blesses with much affection of heart for to love and to thank Him by with words and psalms according to the loving and praising of God as David says. That is the second manner of prayer that pleaseth God much and maketh a man somewhile to have Him in his body as He were drink, and maketh him in sooth to be wounded with the sword of Love. This manner of prayer pleaseth God, for it is only in the affection of the heart and therefore it goeth never away without some grace. This prayer belongeth to the second part of contemplation. Whoso hath this gift of God it fervently behoveth him for the time to flee pleasure and the company of all men and to be alone that he be not letted. Whoso have it hold it while he may for it may not

last long in the fervour. For if grace come plenteously it is travaillous wondrously in the spirit, though it be liking, and it is much wasting to the bodily kind who so much useth it, for it maketh the body, if Grace come mightily, for to stir and turn here and there as a man that were mad or drunk or can have no rest. And this is part of the passion of Love, the which by Grace and Mastery breaketh down all lust, and all liking of all earthly things, and it woundeth the soul with the blessed sword of Love, that the body faileth and falleth down and may not bear it. This touching is of so great might that the most vicious and fleshly man living, if he were well touched and mightily with this sharp sword, he should be very sad and sober a great while and loathe all the liking of the flesh and all earthly things that he had before most liking in.

Of the Third Manner of Prayer—only in heart without speech

The third manner of prayer is only in the heart without speech—by great rest and softness of the body and of the soul. A clean heart him behoveth to have that should pray well thus, for it is of such men and women that by long travail bodily and ghostly or else by such sharp suffering of love, as I forsaid, come to rest of spirit so that their affection

is turned into a ghostly savour that they may even continually pray in their heart and love and praise God without great letting of temptations or of vanities. Of this manner of prayer speaketh St Paul thus :—"Nam si orem lingua, spiritus meus orat, mens autem mea sine fructu est. Quid ergo est? Orabo spiritu orabo et mente." That is to say "If I pray with my tongue only by will of the Spirit and by travail, this prayer is needful but my soul is not fed yet feeleth not the fruit of ghostly sweetness by understanding." What shall I do then, saith St Paul, and he answereth and saith "I shall pray by travail and by desire of spirit and I shall pray also inward in my spirit without travail, by feeling of ghostly savour and sweetness of the Love and the sight of God by the which sight and feeling of love my soul shall feed." This as I understand St Paul counted prayer.

Of this manner of Prayer speaketh our Lord in Holy Writ by figure thus :—"Ignis in altari meo semper ardebit et cotidie surgens sacerdos mane subiciet ligna, ut ignis non extinguatur."

That is to say that the fire of Love shall enlighten the soul of a devout man or woman the which is the Altar of our Lord and the priest shall every day at morning lay to stubble and nourish the fire, that is for to say, this man shall by holy psalms, clean thoughts, and fervent desires nourish

the fire of Love in his heart that it go not out no time. This rest our Lord giveth to some of His creatures and granteth it as it were for a reward of their travail or a shadow of the Love they shall have in the Bliss of Heaven.

How Men shall do that be travailled with Vain Thoughts in their Prayers

But now sayest thou that I speak on high to thee in this matter and manner of prayer; for it is no hard struggle for me to say it, but for to do it is struggle.

Thou canst not pray so devoutly nor so wholly in heart as I speak, for when thou shouldst have the mind of thine heart upward to God in thy prayers, thou feelest so many vain thoughts of thine own of what thou hast done or shouldest do, or of other men's deeds and such many other lettings and tarryings, so that thou mayest nought feel savour nor rest in thy prayers nor devotion in thy saying. Oft-times the more thou travailest to keep in heart thy fervour it is from thee, and thou trowest some time, from the beginning to the last ending, thy thinking it is but lost for all that thou doest. As unto this that thou sayest, that I speak too high to thee of prayer, I grant well that I speak otherwise than I can or may do. Nevertheless I say it for this intent that thou shouldest know how

we ought for to pray an we do well, and sith we may not do so that we know then meekly to repent and cry God mercy. Our Lord said so Himself when He said " Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde et ex tota anima tua et ex omnibus viribus tuis "—" Thou shalt love God of all thine heart and of all thy soul and all thy might." It is impossible to any man for to fulfil this bidding so fully as it is said, living on earth, and nevertheless our Lord bade us for to love so, for this intent as said S. Bernard, " We shall know thereby our feebleness and then cry meekly ' Mercy ' and we shall have." Nevertheless I shall tell thee as me thinketh in this asking. When thou shalt pray make thine intent and thy will in the beginning as whole and as clean as thou canst to God, ghostly in thy mind, and then begin to do as thou mayst ; and if thou be so much letted against thy first will, be not so much adread nor too angry with thyself, nor impatient against God that He giveth thee not the savour in ghostly sweetness, which devotion, as thou thinketh He giveth to other creatures. But see thereby thine own feebleness and bear it easily beholding in thine own sight thy prayer as it is, with meekness of heart, trusting also meekly and securely to the Mercy of our Lord God that He shall make it good, more than thou knowest or feelest. And if thou doest this all shall be well,

for wit thee well that thou art excused of thy debt and thou shalt have meed for it, as for another good deed that thou doest in charity though thine heart were not thereupon in the doing. Therefore do that belongeth to thee and suffer our Lord to do what He will and teach Him nought. And though thou think that thou art reckless and negligent and as thou wert in great default for such negligence, yet nevertheless shalt thou for this default and all other venial sins which may not be all eschewed in this wretched life, lift up thine heart to God, knowing thy wretchedness, and cry "Mercy" with a good trust of forgiveness, and God shall forgive them. Strive no more for that nor hang no length thereupon and thou wouldst not by struggling feel no such wretchedness. Leave off and go and do some good deed, bodily or ghostly and think for to do better another time. But though thou fail another time in the same way and a hundred times, yea a thousand times, yet do as I have said and all shall be well. For there is many a soul that may never find rest of heart in prayer, but all their lifetime are striving with their thoughts and tarried and troubled with them. If they keep them in meekness and charity on all sides they shall have full much meed and heaven for their good travail.

Of Meditation

Now of meditation I tell thee a little. As methinketh thou shalt understand that in meditation may no certain rule well be set any man for to keep. For it is a free gift of our Lord after the sundry disposing of chosen souls and after the state that they are in. Also after that they profit in virtues and in their state, so increaseth their meditation in ghostly knowing and loving of Him. That may be shewed openly in the Apostles when they, in the Day of Pentecost, were filled with burning love of the Holy Ghost, they were made no fools but wonder-wise both in knowing and in speaking of ghostly things as much as a man might have in fleshly living. Thus saith Holy Writ of them :—" Repleti fuerunt omnes Spiritu Sancto et cœperunt loqui magnalia Dei." They were fulfilled with the Holy Ghost and they began to speak the great mysteries of God. And all that knowledge they had by receiving of Love and of the Holy Ghost.

Of Meditation of Sinful Men after they be turned to God

Sundry meditations there be which our Lord putteth in many hearts. Some shall I tell thee, as me thinketh, for this intent—if thou feel any of them that thou shouldst the better travail in

them. In the beginning of conversion of such a man as has been most soiled with worldly or fleshly sins, commonly his thought is most upon his sins, with great compunction and sorrow of heart, great weeping and many tears of the eyes ; meekly and busily asking mercy and forgiveness of God for them. And if he be touched sharply our Lord will make him soon clean. Then him shall think that is his sight his sins are foul and so horrible that nought he shall more bear himself for heaviness of sin and though he shrive him never so clean yet shall he find biting of his conscience, and he shall think that he is not shriven aright and never shall he now have any rest, in so much that he shall not endure in such travail, were it not that our Lord of His Mercy comforteth him some time as he will, by great devotion of His Passion or by some other way.

Upon this manner worketh our Lord in some men's hearts, more or less, as He will, and all this is great mercy of our Lord that will forgive the sin and the trespass and the pain of purgatory that was due to the trespass for such a little pain here of biting of conscience. Also if He will dispose a man for to receive any special gift of His Love he must first be scoured and cleansed by such a fire of compunction till all the great sins be fordone. Of this manner of prayer speaketh David in many

psalms of the psalter and specially in this Psalm—"Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam." And after this travail and such time as from all such sins a man by grace of God hath grown in innocence then our Lord giveth to him a Meditation of His Blessed Manhood and also of His Birth or His Passion or the compassion of our Lady St Mary.

That the Meditation of the Manhood of Christ or of His Passion is given of God and how it shall be known when it is given

When the meditation is made by the Holy Ghost then it is right profitable and gracious and shalt thou wit by this token when it is so, that thou art stirred to devotion in God, and suddenly thy thought fleeth from all worldly and fleshly things and thus thinketh as thou saw nothing save the Lord in bodily likeness as He was on earth. How He was taken by the Jews and bounden as a thief and despised, scourged and condemned to death. How meekly He bare the cross upon His Back and how cruelly He was nailed thereupon. Also of the crown of thorns upon His Head and of the sharp spear that stung Him to the Heart, and then thou in that ghostly sight feelest thine heart stirred with so great compassion and pity of the Lord Jesu that thou

mournest and weepest and tryest with all the might of thy body and of thy soul wondering at the great love and the patience of our Lord Jesus that He would for so sinful a catiff as thou art suffer so much pain. And also upon this thou feelest so much goodness and mercy in our Lord that thine heart riseth up into gladness of Him with many sweet tears, having great trust of forgiveness of thy sins and of the salvation of thy soul, by the virtue of His precious Passion. Then when the mind of Christ's Passion, or any point of His Manhood is thus made in thine heart by such ghostly sight with devout affection and stirring unto, wit thou well that it is not of thine own working, nor stirring of no wicked spirit but by the grace of the Holy Ghost, for it is an opening of the ghostly sight into Christ's Manhood and it may be called the Fleshly Love of God, as St Bernard saith, in as much as it is set in the fleshly kind of Christ and it is right good and a great help in destroying of great sins, and a way for to come to virtues, and so forth to contemplation of the Godhead ; for a man shall not commonly come to the ghostly delight and contemplation of the Godhead but if he come first in imagination to the bitterness and compassion of His Manhood. Thus St Paul did, for first he said thus :—"Nihil judicavi me scire nisi Jesum Christum et Hunc Cruci-

fixum "—" I shewed me not that I knew but only Jesus Christ and Him crucified." As if he said: My knowing and my trust is only in the Passion of Christ; and therefore he said this also :—" Gloriare absit mihi nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesus Christi "—" Forbid to me all manner of joye and liking but in the Cross and in the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ." And afterwards he said this :—" Predicavi vobis Christum, Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam." As if he said :—" I preached first to you of the Manhood and of the Passion of Christ but now I preach to you the Godhead—Christ's might and the endless wisdom of God."

That the Meditation of the Passion of Christ is withdrawn from them that it is given to, oft-times for divers skills

This manner of meditation a man hath not always when he would, but when our Lord will. To some men and women He giveth it them all their life-time, when He visiteth them. As some devout men be so tender in their affection that when they hear one speak, or else they think, of Christ's Precious Passion, their hearts melt in devotion and they be fed and comforted by virtue of it, against all manner of temptation of the enemy. It is a great gift of God. To some men He giveth it forth plenteous and after, He withdraweth it for divers

causes—either if a man waxeth proud of it in his own sight or for some other sin by the which he maketh himself unable for to receive the grace, or else our Lord withdraweth it and other devotion some time from a man or woman for He will suffer them for to be assayed with temptations of his enemy and so will He dispose a man for to know and feel Him more Ghostly ; for He said so Himself to His disciples :—" Expedit vobis ut ego vadam si enim non abiero Paracletus non veniat ad vos "—" It is speedful for you that I go from you bodily for if I go not the Holy Ghost may not come to you." For as long as He was with them they loved Him much, but it was fleshly in the Manhood. Therefore it was speedful unto them that He should withdraw the bodily form from their sight that the Holy Ghost might come to them and teach them for to love Him and know Him more ghostly as He did on the Day of Pentecost.

Right so is it speedful to some that our Lord withdraweth the Bodily and the Fleshly likeness from the eyes of the soul that the heart might be set and stayed more busily in ghostly desire and teaching of the Godhead.

OF GHOSTLY LOVE[1]

Of Tokens and Workings of Love.
Of Withdrawing of Devotion.
How Men shall do of Feelings that are to eschew to a Ghostly Man.
Of Degrees by which a man passeth forth to Contemplation.
Of Feelings of Ghostly Love.
Of the Perfect Love of Christ without which all other Love be suspect.
Of Transforming the Soul into the Love of Christ.
How Ghostly Love is often turned into Fleshly Love.

The First Token of Love is that the soul submits fully himself to the will of him that he loveth. This special love hath three workings. The first is that if he that be loved is simple and poor, meek and in despite, then he that loveth wisheth[2] to be vile, poor and meek, and to be in reproof, like to him that he loveth. The second, that it maketh a man to leave all men's affection of friendship that is contrary to the love, and so it maketh him to forsake father and mother and all other affections, in as much as they be contrary to the will of him that he loveth. And the third is that there is

[1] MS. Rawlinson, C. 894.

[2] "Conceiteth."

nothing hid in the one's heart that he will not show to the other. And this is a special token of high love between two persons. This is the fulfilling of these other workings aforesaid, from which, through the shewing of privities, their hearts are opened so that they are together more perfectly bounden.

Of Withdrawing of Devotion

If thou wilt continually fly up to perfection in the way of God, which thou art entered in, and profit more and more, and increase from virtue to virtue, thou shalt never pray the less when grace of devotion is withdrawn, and temptation and tribulation come upon thee, than when thou hast grace of devotion without temptations. But then it is most acceptable and speedful to God when, in withdrawing of devotion, thou art in tribulation and in discomfort, and yet none the less thou prayest, and watchest and doest all other good deeds, without devotion, which thou didst before with devotion. Wherefore if there come sometime temptation and tribulation, the which are ordained to punish and to cleanse God's children, and devotion be withdrawn, strive thee then not the less to pray, and not the less in other good works for to stand, so that thy continuance in prayers, with the tears of thine eyes increasingly

exercise thee that thou might, as it were, constrain God to give thee fervent heat of holy devotion.

So thou that longest to cheer thy beloved dear Lord Jesus Christ, shall do well that puttest to Him prayer that is made with great enforcing, when the slow flesh would be mourning ; which is to God acceptable, for that it driveth the Lord Jesus Christ for to yield, and for to grant to thee grace and devotion, and in temptations great profit. Pray then continually if thou wilt purchase the grace of devotion and for to profit in the way of Christ ; and for no tribulation, nor for no temptation, leave neither prayers nor working of worldly works, neither in bed nor out of bed, in company nor solitary, for if thou be in tribulation or in temptation and prayest lastingly, grace and devotion shall be granted and new comfort shall be given to thee of Jesus Christ thy Lord. And though the fiend put in thine heart that it is nought, that thy prayer is despised, defy him with mouth and heart and ever pray, and the more that thy tribulation and affliction is, the more shall be the comfort, when grace of devotion is given to thee. Pray then continually, reading in the Book of Life of Jesus Christ, the which was poverty, meekness, sorrow, despite, affliction, and soothfast obedience. When thou art well entered in this way then many temptations and tribulations of the fiend, of the

world and of the flesh shall in many wise dis-ease thee, and hugely torment thee and discomfort thee ; but if thou wilt outdo all, still fully piously and patiently abide in thy loved Lord Jesus Christ, and He shall send thee help and comfort unspeakable, that no tongue may tell how much it is. When thou art tormented with tribulation or temptation use often with thy prayer, confession, in the which thou shalt shew with all the contrition of thine heart to thy confessor, entirely and plainly all the wounds of thy conscience most and least, as forforth as thou wouldest shew them to thine angel. It is a sovereign medicine to put all temptations and tribulations away and for to purchase much grace of God's comfort, for the Fiend, that is full of pride, may not suffer the cleanness of pure confession, nor the fervour of continual orisons, through which works specially, our sweet Lord Jesus Christ is, as it were, through violence drawn unto a loved soul and so constrained for to comfort it. Set then all thy study and thy business for to make ready a place and a privy chamber to thy Lord Jesus Christ thy Spouse, in thy soul, by sweet meditation, by continual orisons, and by often confessions, made each day or else each third day if a body have leisure, so that thou beest sure of the time. Be not forgetting in the which thou hast many times offended the

worthy Lord Jesus Christ, for through these aforesaid workings, namely meditation, orisons and confession, many a man cometh to restfull clearness of conscience. But beware that thou through carelessness give no place to thine enemy's continual besieging, for that thou dost, if, whether from vanity or idleness, thou leavest thy prayers. Therefore the more stably dwell in thy prayer, and leave it not lightly but for feebleness of thy head or thy brain; for which feebleness of brain will sometimes fall of unreasonable continuance in prayer, or in watching or excess in fasting. Then it is good to stint a while; for why? S. Jerome saith, he errs not a little but much, that prefers the less good to the more good, as he doeth if he setteth more by fasting than by deeds of charity, or if he setteth by watching before wholeness of brain, of wit or of reason. He also errs greatly if by innumerable or indiscreet saying or singing of psalms or of hymns he falleth into frenzy or into madness or into bitter griefs. Therefore it is good, then, to abstain from multitude of words, and think only in thine heart as best thou may, and so through virtue of continual prayer used somewhat in mouth, somewhat in heart, shalt thou be delivered and eased from temptations. By continuance in prayer is light of grace given to a soul which cleanseth the conscience, and setteth it

groundedly in deep stedfastness and soothfastness of meekness. And through continual looking and reading in the Book of Life that is on the Blessed Person of Jesus Christ and His Life is the soul rooted and grounded in patience and charity for which in thy looking mayst thou be kenned and informed of all that thou needest for to know; through which thou shalt moreover have such patience that thou shalt will to receive gladly all manner of tribulation and dis-ease, as for a great comfort; for which through them thou shalt feel and see thyself somewhat like to the Lord Jesus Christ, Him that thou lovest. Thou shalt hold thyself so vile and so unworthy in God's sight that it is no dis-ease to thee what-soever thou mayest suffer for which [1] without comparison He suffered more for thee. Nevertheless shalt thou trust and hope that if thou art fellow with Him in pain and in dis-ease, still if it be so shalt thou be fellow with Him in His Kingdom and in His Bliss, for as the Apostle :—" If we be fellows in Christ's Passion we shall be fellows of His blessed consolations." Wherefore it followeth that there is no more dignity nor worthiness a man may come to than for to have tribulation for Christ's Love, by which a man is made Christ's fellow here in this life and in the Bliss of Heaven. AMEN.

[1] Because.

How Men shall do of Feelings that are to eschew to a Ghostly Man

Beware first that thou give not thyself nor thy full affections nor thy friendship to no person but if thou first have received the spirit of discretion by the which thou mayst know from which thou shalt flee and which thou shalt draw to. Until the time thou come to this keep thyself even plain and common to all men. Also beware specially of them that have sweet pleasant words in their speaking and have no holiness in virtue, no sweetness in heart, but a likeness of holiness only in thought and in habit: those that shew themselves and boast themselves of visions and of revelations, nay of feelings of singular doings or wits or understandings: or other men by whom thou art admired or over-much praised and worshipped of them. For such manner of men are oft-times snares and deceits to them that are not wise.

First avise thee of them and look at them and bring them in thy mind in the Presence of Jesus Christ. If thou wouldest take anything out of a murky place for to know what it is and see it and look at it in the light; right so Jesus Christ is sight, and there shall be no light but of grace and faithfulness; but them and such manner of men and all other and thyself with them bring in thy

prayers and in thy mind to Jesus Christ and there shall ye be seen what ye are. There shall they be tried; there thou shalt through beholding of Him and His Life see who is like to Him and who is unlike to Him. But yet beware that thou deem not a man fully what is after thy sight. But all cometh as a thing uncertain into the Presence of God's Doom.

Nevertheless thou mayst from that one sight of Christ's Life follow and rule thine own conscience in this point whom thou shalt follow and whom refuse, with whom thou mayst be homely and with whom thou shalt be strange, and what man it behoves thee to deny.

Also beware of fervours. As if thou feel the spirit of fervour greatly fallen upon thee think first and avise thee well as how thou follow it, in considering what is the beginning of it and whereof it is caused, and think upon the middle and what will produce it, and then follow it as much as thou mayst understand by grace and counsel and by Holy Writ that it is according to soothfast virtue of discretion, and to the Life of Christ; the which Life of Christ thou shalt make thy mirror and rule and sample to do after it. For in this Life of Christ shalt thou be more rewarded after the inner virtue of Christ than after the outer tokens of His learning.

Yet also beware of him that saith that he has

gotten the spirit of freedom and that they have so much grace of love that they may live as they lust. They think themselves so free and so sober that they shall not sin. They make themselves above the law of Holy Church and they say thus as S. Paul saith :—" Where the Spirit of God is, there is freedom," and also thus :—" If ye be led by the Spirit ye are not under the Law." But they mean not as S. Paul meant ; they understand not his words. These men are especially against the Life of Christ. For why ? Christ that was made free made Himself thrall for us, and when He was above the Law, as Maker and Giver of it, yet He made Him born under the Law. Of these men S. Peter thus :—" They preach to all men freedom of spirit and they themselves are holden in sin and servants of fleshly corruption."

Of Feelings of Ghostly Love and the Perfect Love of Christ

The best love and truest is when a soul is raised and lifted into knowing and seeing of God in Christ, as when the soul seeth how each man hath his being that is in God and it seeth that nothing has soothfast being but God. This knowing, the soul receiveth a wonderful savour and a great understanding that whatsoever is of that Being it is good and all that He doeth is best done.

This knowledge strengtheneth and raiseth up a love in the soul as answering to the ghostly beholding of the being of Christ and this knowledge maketh a man to love all that have been of Him, that is all creatures reasonable and unreasonable, for His love that giveth being to all creatures. Specially it strengtheneth a soul to love reasonable creatures and most that which it perceiveth most loved of Christ; for as it seeth Jesus Christ inclined to the love of creatures so it is inclined. Then is the soul kenned for to love creatures more or less after the measure and the quality of Christ's love to them and of their love unto Him; and the grace of Christ keepeth that soul so that it shall not pass measure.

Therefore till thou feel this manner of love firmly grounded in thine heart (the which is had of ghostly knowing of the being of Christ) hold all love suspect and be afraid. But when thou mayest come to the point that thou mayst hold the sight of thy soul on that blessed Person of Jesus Christ and on His Holy Being stably in weal and woe in ease and dis-ease, without great declining from Him, then that wonderful love that is caused by this knowing and of this beholding is sufficient for to stand against the venomous darts of all fleshly loves, and for to put out her malice from the mind of the soul.

A TREATISE ON THE MIXED LIFE[1]

BRETHREN and sisters ghostly and bodily, two manner of states there be in Holy Church by the which Christian souls please God and get them the bliss of Heaven—the one is bodily the other is ghostly. The bodily working belongeth principally to worldly men and women which have lawfully worldly goods and wilfully use worldly business. Also it belongeth to all young beginning men which come new out of worldly sins to the service of God, for to make them able to ghostly working and for to break down the unbuxomness of the body by skill and such bodily workings that it might be supple and ready and not much contrary to the spirit in ghostly working. For as St Paul saith, "As woman was made for man and not man for woman, just so bodily working was made for ghostly and not ghostly for bodily." Bodily working goeth before and ghostly after; so saith St Paul, "Non quod prius spirituale sed quod prius animale, deinde spirituale."

[1] MS. Rawlinson, A. 356.

Ghostly works cometh not first, but first cometh bodily works that are done by the body and sithen cometh ghostly after, and this is the cause why it behoveth to be so. For we are born in sin and in corruption by the flesh, by which we be so blinded and so overlaid that we have never the ghostly knowledge of GOD by light of understanding, nor ghostly feeling of Him by clean desire of loving, and for that we may not suddenly stir out of this murky pit of this fleshly corruption to that ghostly light; for we may not bear it, nor suffer it for sickness of ourself, no more than we may with our bodily eyes, when they are sore, behold the light of the sun: and therefore we must abide and work by process of time.

First in bodily works we must busy ourselves till we be discharged of this heavy burden of sin, which letteth us from ghostly works and till our soul be somewhat cleansed from great outward sins and enabled to ghostly works. By this bodily working that I spoke of mayst thou understand all manner of good works that the soul doth by the wits and the members of the body unto thyself, as in fasting, waking and refraining of fleshly lusts, by doing penance, or to thy even Christians by fulfilling the deeds of mercy bodily or ghostly, or unto GOD by suffering of all manner of bodily mischiefs for the love of righteousness. All these

works done in truth by charity please GOD, without which they be nought. Then whoso desire to be occupied ghostly, it is siker [1] and profitable to him that he be first well arrayed a long time in this bodily working; for these bodily deeds are a token and a showing of moral virtues, without which a soul is not able for to work ghostly. Break down first pride in bodily hearing and also within thy heart, thinking, boasting and praising of thyself and of thy deeds, presuming of thyself, and vain lyking in thyself of anything that GOD hath sent thee bodily or ghostly. Break down also envy against thine even-Christians, whether they be rich or poor, good or bad; that you hate them not nor have disdain of them wilfully, neither in word nor deed. Also break down covetousness of worldly good, that thou for holding or getting, or saving by it, offend not thy conscience nor break not charity to GOD nor to thine even-Christians, for love of any worldly good, but that thou gettest to keep it and to spend it without love or vain liking of it, as reason asketh, in worship of GOD and help of thine even-Christians. Break down also as thou mayst fleshly liking either in *accidie* (sloth) or in bodily ease, or gluttony or leechery. Then, when thou hast been well travailled and well arrayed in all such bodily works, thou mayst then,

[1] *i.e.* safer.

by grace, ordain thee to ghostly working. Great is the goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He hath showed to thee in withdrawing of thine heart from lust and from liking of worldly vanity and use of fleshly sins and in the turning of thy will entirely to His Service and His Pleasure, bringing into thine heart much matter to love Him in His Mercy. Also it stirreth me greatly for to strengthen thee in thy good purpose and in thy working that thou hast begun for to bring it to a good end, if that I could, principally for GOD and also[1] for tender affection of love which thou hast to me. Although I be a wretch and unworthy, I know the desire of thine heart that thou desirest greatly to serve our Lord by ghostly occupation and holy, without letting or troubling of worldly business, that thou might come by grace of more knowing and ghostly feeling of GOD, and of ghostly things. This desire is good, as I hope, and of GOD, for it is sent from Him specially. Nevertheless it is to be refrained and ruled by discretion as even outward working after the state that thou art in; for charity unruled turneth sometimes into vice. For this is said in Holy Writ, "Ordinavit in me caritatem"—that is to say, "Our Lord giving to me charity, set it in order and in rule, that it should not be lost by my discretion." Right so this Love and this Desire that our Lord hath

[1] Sithen.

given, of His mercy, to thee is for to rule and to ordain how thou shalt pursue it after that degree and after the living that thou hast used before this time, and after the grace of virtues that thou now hast. Thou shalt not follow this desire for to leave occupation and business of the world, which are needful to use, in ruling of thyself and of all that are under thy keeping, and give thee wholly to ghostly occupation of prayers and holy meditation, as it were a friar or a monk or another man that were not bounden to the world by children and servants as thou art; for it falleth not to thee, and if thou do so thou keepest not the order of charity. Also if thou wouldest leave utterly ghostly occupation, namely, now after the grace of GOD hath given it unto thee and set thee wholly to the business of the world, to the fulfilling of the work of active life, as fully as another man that hath never felt devotion, thou leavest this order of charity, for thy state asketh thee to do both in diverse times. Thou shalt mingle the works of active life with ghostly works of contemplative life, and then thou doest well; for thou shalt at the same time with Martha be busy for to rule and govern thy household, and children, and servants, and neighbours and tenants; if they do well, strengthen them therein and help them; if they do evil, for to teach them, amend them, and chastise them. And thou shalt also

look and know wisely thy things and thy worldly goods, that they be right wisely kept by thy servants, governed and duly spent, that thou might more plentifully fulfil the deeds of mercy with them unto thy even-Christians. Also thou shalt, with Mary, leave the business of this world and sit down at the feet of thy Lord, by meekness, in prayer and in holy thoughts and in contemplation of Him as He giveth thee grace. So shalt thou go from one to the other meedfully and fulfil them both and then keepest thou well the order of charity.

Unto what Manner of Men Active Life accordeth

Nevertheless that thou have no wonder of this that I say, here I shall tell or declare to thee a little of this more openly. Thou shalt understand that there are three manners of living, one Active, the other Contemplative; the third is made of both, and that is Mingled Life. Active life alone belongeth to worldly men and women which are lewd[1] in knowing of ghostly occupation for they feel no savour nor devotion by fervour of Love as other men do, nor have they any skill of it, and yet nevertheless, they have fear of GOD, and of the pain of Hell, and therefore they flee sin, and they have desire for to please GOD and for to go to Heaven, and good will have they to

[1] Ignorant.

their even-Christians. Unto these men it is needful and speedful to use the works of active life, as busily as they may, in the help of themselves and of their even-Christians for they cannot else do.

Unto which Men belongeth Contemplative Life

Contemplative Life alone belongeth to such men and women as for the Love of God forsake all open sins of the world and of their flesh and all business charges and governance of worldly goods, and make themselves poor and naked to the bare need of the bodily kind, and flee from sovereignty of all other men to the service of GOD. Unto these men it belongeth for to travail and to occupy themselves inwardly to get through the Grace of our Lord cleanness in Heart and peace in Conscience by the destroying of sins and receiving of virtues and so for to come to contemplation. Which cleanness may not be had without great exercise of body and continual travail of the spirit in devout prayers and fervent desires and ghostly meditation.

Unto which Men belongeth Mingled Life

The third life, that is mingled life, it belongeth to men of Holy Church as to prelates and to other curates, the which have care and sovereignty of other men, for to teach and rule both their bodies

and their souls, principally in the fulfilling of the deeds of mercy bodily and ghostly. Unto these men it belongeth some time to use works of mercy in active life in help and sustenance of themselves and their subjects and of others also, and sometimes for to leave all manner of business outward and to give them unto prayers and meditations and reading of Holy Writ, and to other godly occupations after that they feel them disposed.

Also it belongeth to some temporal men the which have sovereignty with much having of worldly goods and have also as it were lordship over men to govern and sustain them as a father over his children, a master over his servants, a lord over his tenants, which men have also received of our Lord a gift of grace and devotion and, in particular, savour of ghostly occupation: unto these men belongeth a mingled life that is both active and contemplative. For if these men notwithstanding the charge and the bond which they have taken, will leave utterly the business of the world, which ought skilfully to be used in the fulfilling of their charge, and wholly give them to the contemplative life they do not well, for they keep not the order of Charity, which, as thou knowest, lieth both in the Love of God and of their even-Christians.

How Holy Bishops used the Mixed Life

This life led and used the Holy Bishops before, which had cure of men's souls and ministration of temporal goods. For these holy men left not utterly the ministration and the overlooking of the dispending of worldly goods, and gave them wholly to Contemplation—as much Grace of contemplation as they had—but they left full oft of their own rest in contemplation when they had liever have been still thereat; yet for love of their even-Christians they entangled them with worldly business in helping of their subjects. And soothly it was Charity, for wisely and discreetly they parted their lives in two. One time they fulfilled the lower part of Charity by works of active life, for they were bounden thereto by taking of the prelacies, and another time they fulfilled the higher part of Charity in contemplation of God and of ghostly things, by prayers and meditations; and they had Charity to God and to their even-Christians, both in affection of soul within, and also in shewing of bodily deeds without. Other men that were only contemplative and were free from all cures and prelacy, they had full charity to God and to their even-Christians, but it was only in affection of their soul and not in outward shewing, and in

hap it was the more inward that it was not letted by outward deeds; for they must not, nor yet needed not, nor yet sought not for it.

But these men that were prelates and others also that were holy temporal men had full charity with affection within, and also in working without; and that is properly the mingled life that is made both of active and contemplative life. And soothly for such a man that is in spiritual sovereignty as prelates and curates are, or in temporal as worldly lords and masters are, I hold this mingled life best and most behovely to them as long as they are bounden thereto. But unto others that are free, and not bounden to temporal ministrations nor to spiritual, I hold the life contemplative alone, if they might come thereto soothfastly, were best, most speedful, most meedful, faire and most worthy to them for use and to hold and not to leave it wilfully for no outward working of active life, but if it were in great relieving and comforting of other men, either of their bodies or their souls. Then if need ask it, at the prayer and instance of others, or else at the bidding of other in governance I hope it be good for to shew it to them in outward marks of active life for a time in relieving of their even-Christians.

What Life most to Him accordeth that this was Writ for

By this that I have said thou mayst understand which is one and which is the other and which accordeth most to thy state of living. And soothly, as me thinketh, this mingled life accordeth most to thee. For sithen our Lord hath ordained thee and set thee in the state of sovereignty over other men, as much as it is, and sent to thee abundance of worldly goods, for to rule and to sustain specially all that be under thy governance and the lordship of thy power and knowledge; also whereas thou hast received grace of the mercy of our Lord for to know thyself, and the ghostly desire and savour of His love, I hope that this life that is mingled is best and accordeth most to thee, and that is to part wisely thy living. For wit thee well if thou leave needful business of active life and be reckless and take no keep of thy worldly goods how they are spended nor hast no force of thy subjects nor of thine even-Christians by cause of desire and will that thou hast only to give thee to ghostly occupation, weening that thou art by that excused, if thou dost so, thou dost not wisely.

A Man that hath Sovereignty shall not utterly give Him to Devotion and leave Worldly Business

What are all thy works worth, whether they be ghostly or bodily, but if they be done right wisely and reasonably to the worship of God and at His bidding. Soothly right naught. Then if thou leave the thing thou art bounden to by the way of Charity, of right, and of reason, and will wholly give thyself to another thing wilfully, as it were for more pleasance to GOD which thou art fully bounden to, thou doest not worship discreetly to Him, that art busy to worship His Head and His Face and array it fair and curiously but that leavest His Body with the Feet ragged and rent and taketh no heed thereof. Then thou worshippest Him nought. For it is a vile thing for a man to be curiously arrayed upon his head with pearls and precious stones and all his body be naked and bare as it were a beggar. Right so, ghostly is it no worship to GOD to crown His Head and leave His Body bare. Thou shalt understand that our Lord Jesus Christ, as Man, is Head of a ghostly Body that is Holy Church. The members of the Body are all Christian men. Some are arms and feet and some are other members after sundry working that they use in their living. Then if

thou be busy with all thy might to array the Head that is to worship Himself by mind of His Passion and of His other works in His Manhood, by devotion and meditation of Him and forgettest His Feet, which be the children and the servants and tenants and all thine even-Christians, and leavest them for default of keeping, unarrayed, unkept and not tended to as they ought to be, thou pleaseth Him not for thou doest no worship to Him. Thou makest thee for to kiss His Mouth by devotion and ghostly prayers, but thou treadest upon His Feet and foulest Him, in as much as thou wilt not tent to Him for negligence of thyself the which thou hast taken care of. This me thinketh. Nevertheless if thou thinkest it is not so, for it were a fairer office to worship the Head of Him, as for to be all day occupied in the meditation of the Manhood, than for to go lower to other works, and make clean His Feet, as for to be busy both in word and deed about the help of thine even-Christians, me thinketh not so. Soothly He will more thank thee for washing of His Feet meekly when they are right foul and stinking, than for all the precious painting and arraying that thou canst make about His Head by mind of His Manhood; for that is faire enough and needeth not to be arrayed by thee more. But His Feet and His other Members that are sometime evil

arrayed and have need to be looked to and holpen by thee, sithen thou art bounden unto, for that will gain thee more thanks if thou wilt meekly and tenderly look to them. For the more low service thou doest to thy Lord for love of Him or unto any of His members when need and righteousness ask, with a glad heart, the more pleasest thou Him, thinking that it were enough for thee to be at the least degree and lowest state, since that it is His Will. For it seemeth since that He hath put thee into this state for to travail and serve other men, it is His Will that thou shouldest fulfil it in thy might. This example I say to thee not for thou dost not thus as I say, for I hope thou dost better, but I would thou shouldest do this gladly, and not for to think loth for to leave sometime ghostly occupation and concern thee with worldly business in wise keeping and spending of thy worldly goods in good relieving of thy servants and thy tenants and in other good works, working to all thine even-Christians of thy might. But thou shouldest do both works in divers times and with all good will the one and the other as thou mightest. As if thou hast prayed and been occupied ghostly thou shalt certain times break off that and shalt then busily and gladly occupy thee in some bodily occupation to thine even-Christians ; and also when thou hast been busy outward a while with thy

servants and with other men, profitably thou shalt break off and turn again to thy prayers and thy devotions, after God giveth thee grace, and so shalt thou put away by grace of our Lord slothful idleness and vain rest, that cometh of the flesh under colour of contemplation, and letteth thee some time from meedful and speedful occupation in outward business; and thou shalt be well occupied either ghostly or bodily. Therefore if thou wilt do well thou shalt do ghostly as Jacob did bodily.

For Holy Writ saith that Jacob when he began to serve his master Laban he coveted Rachel his master's daughter for his wife, for her fairness, and for her he served; but when he weened to have had her to his wife he took first Leah the other daughter in the stead of Rachel, and afterwards he took Rachel and so he had both at the last. By Jacob is understood in Holy Writ "overgoer of sins." By these women are understood as St Gregory saith two lives in Holy Church—active life and contemplative life. Leah is as much as to say travaillous, and betokens active life. Rachel is as much as to say "Light of beginning" that is God and betokeneth contemplative life. Leah was fruitful but she was sore-eyed. Rachel was fair and lovely but she was barren. Then right as Jacob coveted Rachel for her fairness and neverthe-

less he had her not when he would but first took Leah and afterwards her sister, right so endeth a man turned by grace of compunction for his sins of the world and of the flesh unto the Grace of God and cleanness of good living. He hath great desire and great longing for to have Rachel, that is to have rest and ghostly sweetness in devotion and contemplation, for it is so faire and so lovable; and in hope for to have this life only, he disposed him for to serve our Lord with all his might, but often when he weeneth to have Rachel, that is rest in devotion our Lord suffereth him first to be arrayed well and travailled with Leah, that is either with temptation of the world or else of the Devil or else with other worldly business bodily or ghostly in helping of his even-Christians. And when he is well travailled in Leah and not overcome our Lord giveth him Rachel that is grace and devotion and rest in conscience. Thus then hath he both Rachel and Leah. So shalt thou do after the example of Jacob; these two lives Active and Contemplative, sithen God hath sent thee both, use them both, the one with the other.

By the one life shalt thou bring forth fruit of many good deeds in help of thine even-Christians and that is active life. By the other thou shalt be made faire and bright and clear in the sovereign brightness that is God—Beginning and End of all

that is made. Then shalt thou be soothfastly Jacob, an outgoer and overcomer of all sins. And after this by the Grace of GOD thy name shall be changed as Jacob's name was turned into Israel—as much as for to say " a man that serveth GOD." Then if thou be first Jacob and discreetly will use these two lives, in time thou shalt after be Israel that is truly contemplative, either in this life, if He will deliver thee and make thee free from charge and business, which thou art bounden to, or else after this life full in the bliss of Heaven when thou comest thither.

That a man shall desire contemplative life it is faire and meedful. Therefore thou shalt have it in thy mind and in thy desire but thou shalt have in use active life, for it is so needful and so speedful.

Therefore if thou be put from rest in devotion, when thou wert liever be still thereat, either by thy children or by thy servants, or by any of thine even-Christians for their profit or for the ease of their heart skilfully asked, be not angry with them nor weary nor fearful as if God would be wroth with thee that thou leavest Him for any other thing. For it is sooth. Leave off lightly thy devotion whether it be in prayer or in meditation and go to thy debt and thy service to thine even-Christians all readily as our Lord Himself bade ye so do. Suffer meekly for His Love without grudg-

ing, if thou mayst, both dis-ease and troubling of thy heart by cause of meddling of such business.

That Man shall sometime have more Devotion when he hath been letted by Outward Works

For it may fall some time that the more troubling that thou hast outwardly in active works the more burning desire thou shalt have to GOD, and the more clear sight of ghostly things by grace of our Lord and devotion, when thou comest thereto. For it farest thereby as thou hadst a little coal and wouldst make a fire therewith and make it burn. Thou wouldest first lay sticks and thereon the coal and it seemeth for a time that thou shouldst quench the coal with the sticks. Nevertheless when thou hast abiden a while and afterwards blowest a little, anon shall spring out a great flame of fire, for the sticks are burned all to fire. Right so is ghostly thy will and desire that thou hast to GOD; it is as it were a little coal of fire in the soul, for it giveth to the soul somewhat of light and ghostly heat, but it is full little, but oft it waxeth cold or turneth to fleshly rest, or sometime into idleness. Therefore it is good for thee to put unto sticks, that are good works of active life, and though it be so that these works, as it seemeth for a time let the desire that it may be neither so clear so fervent as thou would, be not too

dreadful therefore, but abide and suffer awhile and so blow at the fire—that is first go and do thy works and go then alone to thy prayers and to thy meditations and lift up thy heart to God and pray Him of His Goodness that He will accept the works that thou doest to His Pleasure. Hold them as naught in thine own sight but only at the mercy of Him. Acknowledge meekly thy wretchedness and thy frailty and ascribe soothfastly thy good deeds to Him, in as much as they are good, and in as much as they are bad and not done discreetly with all the circumstances that are needful to a good deed, for default of discretion, put them to thyself. Then for all thy meekness shall thy good deeds turn to a flame of fire as sticks laid upon a coal and so shall thy good deeds outward not hinder thy devotion but rather make it more and more.

Our Lord said in Holy Writ thus: "Ignis in altari meo sæpe ardebit et sacerdos mane surgens subiciet ligna ut ignis non extingatur"—"Fire shall burn aye in mine altar and the priest early at morrow shall put under sticks that it be not quenched." This fire is love and desire to God in a soul, which love needeth to be nourished and kept by living fire too of sticks that it go not out. The sticks are of divers matters; some are of one tree and some are of another. A man that is lettered and hath understanding of Holy Writ if

he have this fire of devotion in his heart, it is good for him to get his sticks of holy ensamples and sayings of our Lord by reading of Holy Writ, and nourish the fire with them. And another man unlettered may not so readily have at his hand Holy Writ nor Doctors' sayings, and then it is needful for him to do many good deeds outwardly to his even-Christians, and kindle the fire of love with them. So it is good for each man in his degree after that he is disposed, that he get him sticks of one thing or of another, of prayers or good meditations or Holy Writ or good bodily works for to nourish the fire of love in his soul that it be not quenched; for the affection of love is tender and lightly will vanish when it be not well kept and by good deeds bodily and ghostly continually nourished.

PURGATORY AND HEAVEN

From "A Treatise of Ghostly Battle,"[1] by Richard Rolle

Moreover send thine heart to Purgatory, which is appointed by the Lord to punish them that be clean shriven of all their sins as they pass out of this world, and have not performed their penance here in this life, nor were fully cleansed as it behoved them to be. In the which purgatory they shall be pined (tormented) with bitter pains, and that pain is more hard to suffer and to feel than all pains that the martyrs suffered and more pain than tongue can tell or rehearse. There shall the soul be tormented through a whole year for the penance that might have been done here in a day; therefore our Lord saith: "Diem pro anno dedi tibi"—that is, "I have given thee a day for a year." And trusting for certain that the pain doth nought else but cleanse the soul from sin, for the more joy he shall never bemoan him for this pain

[1] MS. Rawlinson, C. 894.

though he were suffering from the beginning of this world unto the Day of Doom. But the pain that thou sufferest here with meek heart thinking that thou art worthy it and more, for the great trespass and unkindness that thou every day doest against our Lord God, shall both help to cleanse the soul and increase thy bliss in Heaven. Also have mind of six pains that the soul shall have. The first shall be when the body and soul shall part ; for then shall the fiends appear in their likeness to ravish thy soul into Hell with grisly cheer, with challenging and threatening as if it were their right to have it, so to bring it into despair of God's mercy. The second pain is the great dread that the soul shall have till the judgement be ended between the angels and the fiends ; for like as a man being in great tempests on the sea has great dread of drowning, so the soul hearing the great and horrible sins that he has done rehearsed by the fiend is in great dread to be drowned in the Fire of Hell, for though the soul have right belief and right trusting hope to be saved, yet our Lord suffereth it to have this dread for to cleanse it from sin. The third is exile. For the soul is exiled out of this life from his friends and from his heritage which is Paradise, through sin, which they shall never see till they be purified and clarified as clean as it was at the Day of Baptism.

For Saint Anselm saith, Like as gold is purified and clarified by fire here, right so shall the soul be purified and clarified there. Look how much hotter the fire is here than the sun, so much is the fire of purgatory more hot than the fire here. Look what pain it were to suffer any part of the body to burn in the fire here, so much pain and more it is to the soul to be in the fire. Therefore S. Anselm saith that the fire of purgatory is of such a might and so clean that as long as it findeth ought in the soul that coveteth sin it never stinteth. The fourth pain is that the soul is bound with bands of sin that it may not help itself but needs must suffer till the bands be wasted. For like as a man bound must suffer the malice of his enemies, right so the soul must suffer the pains until it be purified. The fifth pain is the sickness that the soul be grieved with, for like as the body is pained and grieved by divers sicknesses here, so the soul shall be pained and grieved in Purgatory with divers pains in divers parts or powers of the soul in which he sinned in his life. . . .

. . . . . .

Now when thou hast well examined what pain is in purgatory, for penance that is not done in this life, and for venial sins that he was not shriven of neither made ruth for them in another way, beware that thou delay not. From day to day do

penance ; neither be careless in doing it nor forget to do it but do it with great meekness and gladness of heart having mind what pain thou wert worthy to suffer for the trespass that thou doest continually against thy Maker, thy Redeemer (thy Again Buyer) and thy merciful Sparer who forgiveth thee the Pains of Purgatory for doing so little penance with a meek heart. Moreover beware of venial sins for it fareth thereby as it fareth by a ship that hath a little hole in the bottom, in the which hole if the water enter, though it be but little, yet by stress of time, by little and little it may sink the ship if it be not cast out. So venial sins, if they be not cast out by sorrow of heart, by prayer, and by alms-deeds may drown the soul into endless pains of Hell as a deadly sin may do. If then Almighty God is displeased and dishonoured by venial sins that are called small sins how much more then is He dishonoured and displeased with deadly sin. And if even venial sin is so great in God's sight how much more then is deadly sin. Therefore have mind of the trespass that thou hast done against God both in word and thought, in delighting, in coveting, in desiring, and churlish dealing, and with a meek heart, and with compunction ask forgiveness and thereto make satisfaction to thine even-Christians of all the trespasses thou hast done against them as far as thy goods will allow, and if

thy goods will not suffer then behoveth thee to ask forgiveness, and if thou mayest not come to their presence for weakness or else because they be dead then be of good will to ask forgiveness and pray for them, that so thou mayest escape the pains of Hell and be soon to be delivered out of the pains of Purgatory through the endless mercy of our Lord God. For all those that are quickened with the gracious illumination of the Holy Ghost, dread these two places, that is Hell and Purgatory, and so keep themselves with all their might from all manner of sins. But for that the kind of man's flesh is so inclined to sin that no day passeth without sin more or less ; therefore our forefathers that were in grace and knew their own weakness, were oft in mourning and oft for thinking in heart, with fasting and alms deeds with prayer and great weeping in sorrowing for sins, through which they were cleansed and cast out of the soul.

Also some men that were before defouled with deadly sin and venial sins innumerable, oftimes, for dread to offend God more and also to have grace and forgiveness of their former deeds, and to fly for peace from a place that had been so painful, have forsaken all the world—both their goods and also the presence of people. For the company of man is a great occasion towards sin.

. . . . . .

Now send thy heart into Heaven to wit how it is there, and thou shalt there find perfection of all goodness. For there is no manner of pain, but ever company in liking and in health. So ever are they filled with all manner of joy and sweetness, for there is all manner of melody with songs of angels bright and there too security of everlasting bliss that never shall have end. Also man's body shall be brighter than the sun when it sheweth highest and shall have more sweetness than any earthly creatures might divine. Their thoughts, their will, and their desires shall be fulfilled in the twinkling of an eye. There nothing shall be but all goodness and comfort, and nothing shall withstand them for they shall be so mighty that they shall moreover pass all hills and valleys and so be from one end of the world to the other in as short time as it may be thought. For, though they were never so feeble here, there they shall be so light, so lusty, so beauteous and so fulfilled with joy that nothing shall withstand them that is contrary to their liking. For they shall have full knowing of all that ever was or ever shall be done. For they shall have full knowing of the full Trinity—the Might of the Father; the Wisdom of the Son; the Goodness of the Holy Ghost; for in the sight of the face of our Lord God they shall know all that may be done by any creature. For S. Austin saith,

They shall see Him both God and man and they shall see themselves in Him, and other things great and small. For all things that now are hid shall then be clear both to sight and knowing. And so they shall be fulfilled in the mind with all manner of joy; for like as a vesture dipped in water is wet both within and without, above and beneath, and on every side and may receive no more liquid for fulness, right so they that shall be saved be fulfilled with joy and bliss without end. Also they shall have full endless life in the sight of the Holy Trinity, and this joy shall pass all other joys, for they shall be in full security that they shall never fail of that excellent joy. Also they shall have perfect love together, for each of them shall so accord with others' will that he that is in the least joy shall be as joyful as him that is in the highest joy as though he were in the same joy. So the joy of that glorious bliss may no man think, nor tongue rehearse, for though all the joys that all earthly creatures could desire might be comprehended, no joy yet were it in comparison with the great joy that is in that glorious bliss. For the joys that are there are so delicate, so comfortable and so full of sweetness that they might die for joy, but that God keepeth them from death; for our Lord God wills that those that have kept His commandments, and submitted them to His laws

should live in bliss withouten end. Those again that will not obey His laws nor keep His commandments, that they live in pain without end. This is right, so that man shall haste then to love our Lord God in virtue and goodness and to hate sin for fear of pain, for if a creature might feel the least drop of the least joy that is in that bliss, he would feel little pain or none, though all the pains that ever were in earth or should be, might be put to him; for the great love that such a soul should have to God and this great desire that it should have for endless bliss would so ravish it that it would feel no pain it might be put to. Never should it have joy of earthly goods nor of worldly worships. This love stirreth a man more by a thousand fold than do the pains of hell and of purgatory to him rehearsed, and pulleth out dread and cleanseth the soul from sin, or maketh it to see God, through ghostly reading in Holy Writ and through ghostly prayers and to stir it to heavenly desires.

But I rede there be many that fare as it doth with a child that is born in a deep prison that is both stinking and horrible to see. The Mother knowing the welfare that she had out of prison is in much sorrow and care and heavyness, desiring with all her might to be out of prison again in her welfare; but the child born in the murkiness of the prison never had knowing of better fare and giveth little heed

to the miscare of the prison. For as long as he hath his mother with him, and his sustenance, although it be full feeble he taketh no care, for he knoweth no better fare. For though his mother tells him of the joy and well-being that is outside the prison, of the sun, of the moon, of the stars and of the fair flowers springing upon the earth, of the birds singing with mirth, of melody, of the rich array of lords and ladies, and of the well-being while out of prison she was wont to have ; yet all this tale is but a dream to the child, for he saw it not, therefore he longeth not thereafter and will not for all the bliss and welfare that she speaketh of forsake his mother nor the poor fare that he hath with her. That is he loveth it not and yet it is as his mother saith. But were the child out of prison and saw the mirth, wealth and welfare that she spake of he would be full sorry to wend again to prison, there to live with his mother for all his life, in prison which was first liking enough to him. Therefore he should never have joy or rest in heart till he were again in that welfare which he saw out of prison. Right so, folk of the world born and brought forth in sorrow and care and much travail, in this wretched life that is foul and stinking as a prison ; for they have so much love and liking for their earthly mother, that is to say earth and earthly things, that they have no liking for heavenly things, nor

long not thereafter. For though their ghostly mother, Holy Church, and their ghostly father, and God Himself, Father of all tell them the bliss of the welfare that is in the bliss of Heaven it is to them but a dream, as the tale of the mother is to the child in prison. . . .

. . . Wherefore withdraw thyself from earthly things yet set not thy love overmuch in thine earthly mother and trust her not for though she speak never so fair, she is false, and will deceive you at the last, for she fareth as the Necker or the Mermaid that will cast upon the water-side divers things that seem gold, fair and glorious to man, but as soon as he taketh it, and weeneth to be sure thereof anon she taketh him and devoureth him. Right so the earthly mother casteth out fair and glorious things to the sight ; she casteth out great riches and worldly goods and worldly worships and fleshly lusts which are fastened by the rope of hope of long life. As soon as thou touchest them, that is to say as soon as thou desirest them, and labourest with all thy might, with all thy heart and with all thy thought to have them, anon she draweth the rope of long life, that is, she saith that thou art young and may live long ; and therefore labour to have goods, and get thee worship, that thou mayest live easily in thine age, and through thy life in leeching, in gluttoning,

in pride, in extortion or in any wrongful taking. When thou comest to age then shalt thou do good alms, and so by prayers of poor men shalt thou have forgiveness. And through hope of long life and other men's prayers if thou live still in sin she will take and devour thee in the fire of hell. Therefore trust her not but set thy trust and love and hope in thy ghostly mother that is so beauteous and cast thee to believe on her, for she saith nothing, but that it shall be performed if thou wilt obey her bidding; for if thou hadst felt or seen the least bliss that is in Heaven then all the joys and likings that thou hast in this world in earthly things should be to thee great bitterness, sorrow and care.

PART OF THE REVELATION OF ST KATHERINE

From "The Garden of Syon" [1]

Of Vicarious Suffering

A Soul that is raised up with heavenly and ghostly desires, and with a great desire languisheth virtuously inhabited by the space of a long time, full busily laboureth in ghostly exercise and meekly abideth in her inward beholding to know herself to that intent only that she might know in herself the Goodness of God.

I remember me that I have read of a Holy Maid and servant of God, Katherine of Sienna, that when she gave herself entirely to prayer with enhancing up her mind to God to behold only Heavenly Things in manner of contemplation, that the Holy God hid not His Love which may not be measured, which He had to his servant with the gift of intellection of the ghostly eye. But specially among

[1] Printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1519.

other words our Lord spake to her and said: "Open the eyes of thine intellect and of ghostly understanding and behold, in Me you shall see the dignity and the fairness of my reasonable creature and the fairness which I have given to thy soul making it of nought to my image and likeness." Also this soul yet moreover willing to know the holy soothfastness of knowing and to follow it by exercise considered first as for herself with a high desire that a soul may by no way of doctrine, nor of example, nor of prayer profit his neighbour, but it is profit first to himself, that is to say in purchasing and having in possession the perfection of virtue in itself. Therefore in that holy desire of soothfast knowledge meekly she asked four petitions of the ever-being Father in Heaven.

The first petition was for herself. The second for reformation of Holy Church. The third in general for the health of all the world which with great presumption and great persecution is rebel to Holy Church, and especially for the health of Christ's people. The fourth petition was that the providence of God should provide for each dark case of doubt or need in general and in special.

This desire was in her full great and abiding continually, which desire increased in her the more fervently when the great wretchedness of this world was showed to her of Almighty God the Maker of all

the world, and when she saw so great trouble in the world and so much offence done to God in the world.

Also in this time of Holy Desire she had understanding of a mystery which she had of her ghostly Father. In the which mystery he showed her a great pain and sharpness of intolerable sorrow ordained for sin. And for the offence done to God and the cause of the losing of souls and for the persecution that is done to Holy Church, which words have kindled in her a fire of desire with a loving and a bitterness for the offence done to God. And she with a gladness and joy of a trusting hope meekly abode the meekness of God which mercifully would provide for all the evils and perils.

And for as much as in receiving of the Holy Sacrament a soul more sweetly and more fervently cleaveth to God and better knoweth His soothfastness : by cause that a soul is in God and God in the soul right as the fishes abide in the sea and the sea in the fishes.

Therefore upon the next morrow following she had a full fervent and burning desire to hear Mass, which day was on a feast of our Lady, God's Mother. And when she had heard Mass at a certain hour with a full great desire to have an inward knowing of herself and of her own imperfection it seemed to her a great shamefastness that she was principal cause of all the evils and diseases done in the world,

and conceived in herself singular hate and displeasure of herself. And there with a desire of a holy righteousness to purify such filthy sins the which she saw in the world and in her own soul, she lift up her heart to her Father in Heaven and said: "Everlasting Father in Heaven, to Thee I make my complaint of myself, and to Thee I plain and accuse myself, with intent that in this life Thou punish my sins. And in as much as I am the principal cause of the pains (through my sins) that Christ's people should suffer, therefore I meekly beseech Thee to put those pains on me."

Then the soothfastness of the Godhead took the desire and fervently drew it to Himself and did like as it was in the Old Testament. For then when the Sacrifices were acceptable to God fire came down from Heaven and drew such a sacrifice to Him. In the same manner that holy soothfastness did to that soul, for the Father of Heaven sent the fire of the Holy Ghost and took the sacrifice of her great desire, which sacrifice she made of herself to God. And when our Lord had received this sacrifice He spake to her and said:—

"Daughter knowest thou not that not all the pains men suffer or any creature may suffer in this world be not worthy at the full nor even worthy penance nor sufficient to punish the least sin. And the cause is for the offence that is done to Me which

am God, and Goodness that hath no end asketh a blame without end.

" Therefore I will that you know that all the pains that are given or sent of God into the world be not for penance but for correction, to amend and correct the child when he trespasseth. And yet furthermore it is sooth that a man maketh or doth satisfaction by a fervent desire of the soul, that is to say by a true contrition and a despising of sin, for true contrition maketh satisfaction to the sin and to the pain for sin, not for the pain that the soul suffereth for the time, which time hath end, but for the desire which the soul hath, which hath no end. Ask for sorrow of heart for sin without end, and love God continually without end. Sorrow it asketh without end that is to say without ceasing in this world and that is to say in two manners. One is that a man hath true contrition for his own offence that he hath done against his God and his own Maker. The second is that a man hath sorrow for sin that he seeth and knows done to God by his neighbour.

" Now desire and contrition of heart maketh satisfaction for sin and pain for sin and sometimes it maketh satisfaction for sin and not for pain. Now daughter I have showed thee how sin in the time that shall pass is not punished only with such penance as is done here, but is punished with penance inwardly that is suffered by desire and with

love owed to God and by contrition of man's heart, not of virtue of pain only but through the virtue of a fervent desire of souls, and as holy desires and other desires of virtues have life, or be acceptable and meritorious when they are taken and blessed for the love of My Son crucified. For as much as the soul taketh love of Him and followeth His steps with virtue and fastings and prayer, in such manner, such penances done they profit thee and in none other wise." . . .

After this God spake to her and said :—" Take heed then intently in thy inward wit in what manner it is said to thee how that satisfaction is made for sin. Thou dost ask pains of Me the which might make satisfaction for the offences done to Me of My creatures. Also thou dost ask of Me which am thy life all things to know and to love perfectly. This is the way thou shalt be in will to ascend to the height of perfect knowledge and thou shalt be in will to taste Me, the which am everlasting soothfastness, so that thou never go out of the way of knowing thyself. And when thou art cast down in the valley of meekness then know Me of whom thou shalt have all things that are to thee necessary or behovable.

" Thee may no virtue stand nor abide but it come of charity, and meekness doth nourish most and best the virtue of charity. Then shalt thou be made

meek in the knowing of thyself if thou consider the which thou hast no being of thyself but thou shalt know thy being of Me, the which loved thee and for all or ever that you were born ; and of my great Love which may not be measured by Will was to reform you again to Grace and in my reforming you again with the burning of so great love the which I had to you, I washed you with the Blood of My Son the which was shed for you. The shedding of that Blood maketh a man to know the soothfastness the which hath put away the cloud of his self-love by knowing of himself the which soothfastness he might not else know. And then in the knowing the soul is clothed with such a fervent love that for that burning love the soul is in continual pain but not in pain which grieveth the soul nor maketh it to fall, but rather that pain maketh the soul more virtuous and refresheth it and comforteth the soul, for she suffereth pain because she knoweth My soothfastness and her own sin and unkindness and the great blessedness of Christ's people. And for the great love that soul hath to Me she is troubled and sorroweth for her unkindness and other man's. And if she loveth Me not yet she should have no pain or trouble."

Of Penance

" There be devout and holy workings which I take of My creatures, that is to say, the inward virtue

of the soul, which the soul hath in continual exercise as it is said before. That is to say not only the virtues which be busied with the instruments of the body as with outward working with divers bodily penances, which be the instruments of virtue but they be no virtues in themselves. For if it were so and those instruments were not subject to those virtues received before, it were little pleasing to Me. But rather if a soul did not discretly his penance that is to say if his affection be rather principally set in his bodily penance then should his perfection be let thereby. Therefore he shall set his heart principally on affection and desire of love, with a holy hatred of himself by very meekness and perfect patience and all other inward virtues of the soul, with a desire of My worship and of the health of souls, which virtue shows that a man's own will is dead and that continually the sensuality is mortified through the desire and love of virtues.

" With such discretion he shall do his penance ; that is to say, put principally his love and desire in virtues rather than in bodily penance, for penance shall be as an instrument to work for increase of virtues as seemeth it speedful.

. . . . . .

" Now daughter thou mayst see that I which am the high soothfastness have shewed to thee a truth

and a doctrine whereof thou shalt go to the most high perfection if thou keepst my teaching. Also I have declared to thee before how that satisfaction for sin and for pain may be fulfilled both in thee and thy neighbour. Also I showed thee that that is no penance that a dead body may suffer, that is to say, that pain only is not sufficient to make satisfaction for sin, but that it be oned and joined with desire and with the affection of charity and with very true contrition and great displeasure of sins. While that penance is knit to charity then the penance maketh satisfaction not of the virtue of the actual pain that a man suffereth but for sorrow that a man hath for sin and for the merit of his charity the which charity a soul hath purchased with a light heart and with a liberal and free light of intelligence beholding Me which am that charity."

. . . . . .

After this holy teaching of our Lord the soul of the maid was kindled and sore stirred up of a great desire with the love of God. And this was showed to her by the Everlasting Father that was so offended, what is the way of perfection and how men may do satisfaction for their own offences and for their neighbours' as shall be most clearly showed after. Also then beholding in the mirror of the High Divine Goodness, this soul knew her own

unworthiness into which unworthiness she fell through her own default and sin. For right as a spot or filth on a man's visage may lightly be perceived in a mirror, so that soul with a very knowledge of herself lifted up her intent and affection by a very perfect desire to behold inwardly with the eye of her ghostly intellection and to see herself in the holy mirror of God, by the which beholding she perceived more than ever she did the foul spots of her soul through the great pureness and cleanness which she had in the sight and knowing of God.

And in as much as this comfortable knowing and desire with an inward bitterness for offence to God was greatly knit together within the aforesaid soul yet, through the hope that our Lord had put in her, the bitterness and the mourning was lessened and decreased in her.

Of the Reformation of Holy Church

Therefore, when the soul was thus purified with the fire of the Divine Charity which she found in the knowing of herself and of her God, and when that holy desire with hope of man's salvation and hope of reformation of Holy Church was thus increased in her, she lifted up her heart with a great love before her Father in Heaven which had showed her the mystery of the world and of the

soul in bonds of Holy Church and much like to the word of Moses she spake to our Lord and said thus :—

"My Lord, turn Thy Merciful Eyes to Thy people and to Thy ghostly Body of Holy Church, for in sparing so many creatures and in giving them the Light of knowing much, the more shall Thy Name be glorified of all Thy creatures; which should give praises to Thee, perceiving and knowing how by Thy endless Goodness they have scaped from the bondes of deadly sins and from perpetual damnation. And when they know what grace Thou hast done to me, a wretch, the which have so greatly offended Thy Majesty and I acknowledge me the cause of all mens sins.

"Therefore, Lord, I pray Thy Divine Charity that Thou take no grief with me and spare Thy people. I shall never go from Thy Presence till I see Thee have mercy on Thy people. What were it to me to have life and to see Thy people have death, or that darkness should arise in Thy Spouse Holy Church . . . which is the principal light for my defaults and for other defaults of Thy creatures."

Then our Blessed Lord Almighty God full of pity turned His Merciful Eyes to the maid and He suffered her tears to be constrained and to be bound with the chains of her holy desire and

therewith speaking to her with a lamentable voice thus began to say :—" Loving daughter thy tears constrain Me for they be knit with My Charity and shed for My Love and thy fervent desire biddeth Me. But daughter behold the face of My sweet spouse that is to say Holy Church how it is defaced and sore spoiled as the face of a leper is blown and swollen of their own unclean living and of their desire of avarice and of their foul coveteousness that may not be quenched in them."

The Ladder of Perfection

The Ever-being God then to stir this soul much more and to heart her more fervently in labour about the health of man's soul answered to her and said :—

" I will put thee in a certain knowledge how it is by the Bridge. I said to thee before that the Bridge reached from Heaven to Earth, that is to say by the union which I made in man whom I formed with slime or earth. This Bridge, My only Begotten Son hath three ladders in Himself, of the which three ladders, two were made in the tree of the Holy Cross, the third He felled in full great pain of bitterness when the Jews gave Him to drink both vinegar and gall. In these three ladders thou shalt know the three states of the soul which I shall declare to thee hereafter. The first ladder

is at the feet and it betokeneth the affection and the desire of the soul. For as the feet bear up the body so the desires and affections bear up the soul. The feet nailed be made ladder to thee that thou mayest attain and reach up to the wound of the side, which wound showeth the privities of the Heart. For after that thou hast ascended up by the feet of desire anon the soul begineth to taste the love of the Heart, fastening the eye of intellection in the Heart of My dear Son where the soul shall find the end—perfect love.

" Furthermore when the soul has ascended by the second ladder she reacheth up to the third ladder, that is to say to the company of Heaven where she findeth the peace which she desired in the war or battle which she had before through her sin.

" For in the first ladder of affection and of desire when she raiseth up the feet from the earth then she voided her from the darkness of vices.

" In the second ladder she fulfilleth herself with virtuous love. And in the third ladder she tasteth a full sweet peace.

" This Bridge is raised up, yet it is not parted from the earth. Thou knowest well when He had raised Himself up, as when He was tormented on the Cross, yet the Divine Nature voided Him not from the lowness of your humanity.

" And that time that He was so raised there was

no man that might go on that Bridge. Therefore He said Himself 'If I be exalted from the earth I shall draw all men unto Me.' And I beholding of My Goodness that ye mighten none otherwise be drawn, I set Him to be araised up to the tree of the Holy Cross. Therefore I made a ghostly anvil whereon the Son of mankind should be forged so that man should be washed and cleansed from everlasting death, and that he should be clothed with durable life by a singular grace. And therefore My Son draweth to Him all things in the manner as it is said before that He should show His great Love which may not be spoken—which Love he had to man—for the heart of man is drawn by love.

". . . Therefore it was speedful that that Holy Bridge should be exalted and that it should have in it ladders that ye might the more lightly pass over the Bridge. Now this Bridge is walled with stones the which betoken very virtues. Also upon this Bridge is a shop ordained whence meat shall be given to way-goers. This worthy Bridge is walled with stone that great rain should not let way-goers. Those stones be soothfast virtues—but those stones were not laid, nor the wall made before My Son's Passion.

" They were so greatly letted before, that no man might come to the end for all the virtuous way he

went. Heaven was not unto that time undone by the keys of His Precious Blood, and the rain of righteousness would suffer no man to pass. But after His Passion the stones were set and laid upon the body of My dear Son. He made up the wall of stones and mingled it with chalk and forged it up with His Precious Blood, that is to say the Blood is mingled with the chalk and strengthened by the Godhead and with the great Fire of Charity.

". . . For He made up the wall and performed the virtues and He placed them as stones of Life with His Holy Blood that all faithful men might pass freely upon that Holy Bridge withouten dread of any great rain by the rightwiseness of the Godhead, for he is covered with the large mercy that came down from Heaven in the Incarnation of My Beloved Son, when Heaven was made open with the key of His Blood.

. . . . . .

" And hereafter shall be showed what manner of governance a soul shall keep and how he shall ascend up to the second grace of Holy Bridge. Now thou knowest in what manner of excellence he dwelleth that cometh to the degree of the love of a friend. Such a one goeth upon his feet of affection and so cometh to the privy secrets of the heart, that is from the first grace to the second befigured in the Body of My only soothfast Son

Jesus. I wot then that these three graces were betokened or marked in the might of the soul betokening principally the three states of the soul. Now therefore on that he comes to the third degree I shall show thee how he shall come to be a dear friend. And after that he is come to be a dear friend to Me anon he is made a child of My Love that he hath to Me and I to him as My own dear child. But first, how that he worketh when he is made a friend, I shall tell it to thee. At the beginning he was imperfect by servile dread, and by the persevering use of the same dread he came to love by ghostly delectation, finding in Me comfort and advantage of his own profit. In sooth this is the way and this way he must go that will come perfectly to love of a dear child and of a friend.

"But what manner of governance must he hold that come to this perfection? I shall tell thee. As every perfection and every virtue cometh out of charity, and charity is nourished by meekness and meekness cometh out of knowledge and of holy hate of himself—that is of his own sensuality and of his very proper will. And for to come to this a man must abide perseveringly and dwell in the cell of his own knowledge. In the which knowledge of himself he shall find My Mercy in the Blood of My soothfast Son Jesus, drawing to him

by holy desire My Divine Charity, and also by exercising himself in destroying all manner of wicked wills both spiritual and temporal, holding himself in his own house as Peter and the other disciples did, the which Peter after the trespass of negation and denying which he did to My Son he wept full sore. Yet nevertheless the weeping was imperfect for it was unto the Ascension. And after a time My soothfast Son came to him in His Manhood; then Peter and all other disciples did hide them in a house, abiding there meekly the coming of the Holy Ghost as My soothfast Son did promise before to them. And all that time they for fear abode in a house secluded. For ever the soul dreadeth unto the time it come to the very love. . . .

"And when they were fulfilled with the greater grace then they cast away dreads and so they followed the steps of My soothfast Son in preaching His Passion over all. In the same wise a soul that desireth to come to this perfection before said, after that she hath sinned deadly and is graciously arisen knowing herself foul and wretched, for dread of pain she begineth for to weep. And after that she ariseth from the dread and beholdeth My Mercy then she findeth delectation and profit—and yet it is imperfect. Therefore like as it was done to the disciples and Peter that were closed in,

so shall it be to such a devout soul done that is risen out of sin and cometh to My Mercy.

"... When a soul riseth from her imperfections I withdraw Me from her by feeling, taking away the comfort that she had. For when she was in deadly sin she went away from Me and I did withdraw Me then from her sins because then she had shut against Me the gate of her desire by the which the Sun of Grace should go and shine through. This is no default of the Sun, but of the creature that shut the gate of desire against the Sun. And when she knoweth herself and her own darkness then she openeth the windows by Holy Confession, casting out thereby the filth of sin. And then I come again into that soul by Grace, but yet I withdraw Me from her by feeling, as I say, and not Grace. This I do because she should ware low and meek and that she should exercise herself in seeking Me busily, and also that she should be verily proved in the holy Light of Faith so for to come to My Wisdom. Then if she verily without looking for any reward love Me with the light of lively and quick Faith and with holy hate of herself, she is joyful in the light of labour and deemeth herself unworthy rest and quietness of soul. ... And therefore she abideth with a quick Faith the coming of the Holy Ghost (that is I Myself) the which am the Fire of very Charity;

truly not with idleness but with bodily waking and continual prayer, and not only with bodily waking, but with intellectual waking. For the eye of the understanding or intelligence is not shut but open, and waketh with the Light of Faith destroying the thoughts of the heart with holy hate, waking in the affections My Charity and knowing that I desire nothing else but her holiness. And this is well certified and made open enough in the Blood of My soothfast Son Jesus. After a time the eye of intelligence waketh thus in knowledge of herself and Me; she prayeth continually offering to Me prayer, with a good will and a holy. This is the continual prayer; and also she useth herself in actual prayer—that is in such prayers as be ordained by Holy Church.

"Thus is a soul accepted that is departed from imperfection and is come to perfection."

How it shall be known when a Soul has come to Perfection

"Now I shall tell thee how thou shalt know when a soul has come to Perfect Love, and that is by the same token that was showed to the holy disciples after the time they had received the Holy Ghost. The which went out of their house and preached the doctrine of My very soothfast Son Jesus, putting away from them fear and dread, nothing

dreading the death or pains but rather were joyful of pains.

. . . . . .

"Now imperfect men only follow the Father—but perfect men follow the Son. . . . For they put nothing else before their eyes than My only soothfast Son Jesus Christ Crucified; they put not Me the Father before their eyes as he doth that abideth and dwelleth in imperfect love—the which will suffer no pain. And because there may no pain fall on Me such one will live with ghostly delectation that he findeth in Me without any pain—seeking Me rather than My soothfast Son Jesus, for such cause it is that he sueth Me, yet not Me but ghostly delectation that he finds in Me. They that love perfectly do not so, but as ghostly drunken men they be gathered together and ascend up the three degrees or ladders the which I figured to thee.

". . . After the time they be then ascended, with the feet of affection of the soul they come to the great hole of the side of My Son where they find the Privy Secrets of the heart and know there the water of Baptism which has virtue in the Blood of My Son's Passion in the which Passion a soul findeth grace by Holy Baptism. . . .

"It was right necessary that My Divine Charity should purchase a remedy to put away previous sins—the which is continual Baptism by Blood that

in a soul cometh by continual contrition of heart, and with Holy Confession when it may be had of my ministers, the which holden the key of that Blood—the Blood they pour down upon the face of the soul in giving of absolution. And if confession may not be had, contrition of heart sufficeth, for then the hand of mildness and meekness largely giveth to you the fruit of the Blood. If that ye may have confession I will that ye have it and use it, for if there be any that may have it and will not he shall be deprived from the fruit of that Blood. Nevertheless sith it is in the last end of a man's death if he will be confessed and may not, yet then My Goodness shall also receive him. Yet should not a man be such a fool that will therefore under such a hope delay his confession and abide unto the last end of his life for he is not siker whether for his obstinacy I in My Divine Rightwiseness may not say to him thus :—' Thou did not think on Me in the time of thy life when thou might, and therefore I shall not have mind of thee now in the end of thy death.' . . .

" Now a soul when it is come to the third degree of the Bridge (*i.e.* perfection) that is to say after the time that it is come to the mouth—anon it taketh the door of the mouth and when the self-will of a man is dead it is a very token that he is come hither. . . . For right as the mouth speaketh with

the tongue that is in the mouth . . . right so a soul speaketh with the tongue of his holy continual prayer.

"Such a soul eateth the meat of the health of souls taking that same meat upon the right blessed table of the Cross, for otherwise nor upon no other table she may in no wise perfectly eat it in truth but it be upon the table of the Cross. . . .

"Then is such an one made fat of the abundance of that meat and the array and clothing of her own sensuality, that is of the body, breaketh, and if it breaketh it dieth and the will that dieth is the sensible will, that is because the ordinated and well-ruled will of the soul liveth arrayed and covered in Me and with a very blessed and endless will. And therefore the sensible will is dead; and all this doth the Perfect Soul that is come in very sooth and very soothfastness to the third degree of the Mouth.

"And the token that it is come is this, that she findeth her own sensible will modified when she tasteth the affection of My Charity—and therefore she findeth in the mouth of the soul peace, and such peace that then may none trouble her because she has forsaken her own special will. . . .

"And therefore then may no man hurt that soul —not the Fiend with all his temptations, for he dreadeth such a soul that is burnt in the furnace of

charity, nor also backbiters, nor wrongers nor injurers of man and yet though the world pursue her he is afraid of such a soul. Thus by My Endless Goodness such a soul is made strong and magnified in the world before Me, because of meekness in her own sight she is made little. This is well known with My saints, which for My Love made them little by meekness in this world and therefore I have made them great in My Endless Life above and also in My material Body of Holy Church where of them is made continual memory. For in Me which am the Book of Life their names are writ; also the world holds them in reverence because they despise the world.

"All that live yet in earth of such condition hide not virtue for dread but for meekness. If their neighbours have need of their service they hide not their ministrations for dread of pain nor for the dread of loss of their own ghostly comfort: for in what manner of wise they exercise their life and their time for My worship they be glad and joyful and find peace and rest of soul.

"In sooth because they choose to serve not after their own manner but My manner and therefore they charge as much the time of prosperity as they do of adversity, as much grieveth them that one as that other, for ever in all things they find My Will—they do busy them with all their desire to

comfort them[1] in all things. . . . Faithfully and well they minister to their neighbours taking no heed to the ignorance and unkindness of their neighbours, no, though a vicious man say to the other vile wrong, and reprove their good deeds, but much rather they cry ghostly in My sight, by holy prayer for them, having more pity and ruth for the offence that is done to Me and that harms therefore their souls than for their own injuries and wrongs.

"Seeth thou not dear daughter that these be sweet tokens that a soul is risen from imperfect love and come into perfect love following that sweet and undefiled Babe My only soothfast Son Jesus, the which hanging upon the Cross fast held with nails of love came not down from the Cross for all the crying of the Jews.

. . . . . .

"So right sweet daughter, all this have I told thee that thou might know the perfection of the state of union where the eye of intellection is rapt by the fire of My endless Charity, in the which Charity is received light above nature, with the which light I am loved—for love reigneth after understanding.

"And the more a soul knoweth the more it loveth, and the more it loveth the more it knoweth that one nourisheth the other. With that light, souls

[1] Their neighbours.

come to the endless glorified light of Me where they see Me and in truth taste Me. This is that excellent state the which yet a mortal man living amongst mortal creatures may taste—by the which ofttimes he cometh to such union that scarce he knoweth whether he be in the body or out of the body, and so he tastest the earnest of everlasting life."

ST BONAVENTURA: "DE PASSIONE CHRISTI"

THE Meditations of St Bonaventura on the Passion were so popular in England that no account of religious literature could be deemed complete without an example of them.

They were studied and known by all contemplative writers, and translations of them in manuscript abound in all libraries.

The following is an extract from one of the manuscripts in the Bodleian Library[1]:—

OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST

Therefore early in the morning-tide the princes and priests and the others of the people came again and made His Hands to be bound behind Him, saying: "Come with us Thief, come to Thy Doom. This day Thy wisdom shall be seen!" And they led Him thus bound to Pilate; and He as an innocent Fool went with them.

For sooth when His Mother and His folk were

[1] MS. Laud, 174.

coming out early in the morning-tide for to come to him, they met Him in the way and saw Him bodily led by so great a multitude of people as a thief. The quantity of sorrow with which they were fulfilled may not be told, for this meeting together and beholding was full of great sorrow on each side. For that benign Lord was greatly tormented with compassion that He had to His disciples and chiefly to His blessed Mother, for He knew well that she made so great sorrow for Him that as her soul and her body might part asunder. Therefore behold and see these things with compassion! For He is led forth to Pilate. The women follow Him afar, for they may not go nigh Him for press of people. . . . But Pilate finding no cause of death in Him is enforced to deliver Him. Therefore he said: "I shall take Him and chastise Him and let Him go." O Pilate, Pilate! Chastisest thou the Lord? Thou wist not what thou doest; for neither is He worthy death nor chastisement. Therefore oughtest thou to fall down and aske correction of Him. But he commanded Him full hard to be scourged. Then the Lord was spoiled and bounden to a pillar and beaten wickedly by evil men. He that was most fair and seemliest before all the children of men, stood naked before them. And by these most cursed sinners meekly he undergoeth this sorrow-

ful tormenting. And that most innocent flesh, tenderest, cleanest and fairest, was all so rent and so torn with the knotted scourges that on every side the gracious King's blood ran down from all the parts of His Body, and thus He was beaten and again beaten; so that blood was made thick upon blood and covered all His body till the people and His tormentors were weary to beat Him any more or to behold Him. And thus not only His Body was made blood-red but also the pillar to which He was bounden. Therefore abide here and behold thy Lord Jesus a good while, and if thy heart have no compassion hold thyself to have a stony heart. For thus was fulfilled what the prophet Isaie saith: "We saw Him, and there was no fair beholding to Him, for we held Him a man put down by God." O Blessed Jesus Who was so bold that durst spoil Thee? Who were more bold that durst bind Thee? But who were those most bold that so despitefully durst beat Thee and scorn Thee?

But Thou Sun of Rightwiseness; thou withdrawest Thy Sun's Beams. Therefore are these darkness and the power of darkness. Thy love Lord and our wickedness have made Thee so feeble. Cursed be so much wickedness, for which Thou art so beaten.

When the Lord was loosed from the Pillar, they

led Him so naked and so scourged about in the House, seeking after His clothes that were throwen about in the house. Behold Him quaking full hard for there was great cold as the Gospel saith.

Then when they would clothe Him again some of the wicked Jews saith to Pilate: "Sure He is making Himself a King. Therefore we should clothe Him, and as a king must crown Him." And they took a foul old silken mantle and put it about Him and crowned Him with a sharp crown of thorns.

Therefore behold Him in all these deeds and torments, for all things He doeth and suffereth that they will; for He submitteth to the purple, on His head He weareth the Crown of Thorns and in His Hands He holdeth a Reed. And they kneel to Him; and they scorn Him, giving Him greeting as a king. He giveth no answer; but He meekly abideth and suffereth. See now with bitterness of heartfelt sorrow and look upon His Head full of thorns. For after they smite down His Crown to His fair Head with the read; so that the keen thorns were driven into the skull. O the cursed wretches! How dreadful shall this King's Head that ye smite now, be seen to you one day! They scorned Him as one that would be a king and could not. And yet their rudeness waxed more. For they gathered companies about Him to behold

Him, to laugh Him to scorn, and to upbraid Him and thus did they bring Him forth again before Pilate. And all they with one voice cried to Pilate, "Hang Him on the Cross! Hang Him on the Cross!" And thus not only sorrows and pains but also scorns and reproofs He suffered meekly of them all with a mild cheer.

Therefore all the multitude of the people remained asking of Pilate and crying out that He should be put on the Cross. And so at last he was doomed by that wicked Deemster Pilate to the Death of the Cross. And so they had neither mind of His good deeds nor of His works nor they were not moved from taking His Life.

And what is more terrible they were nothing withdrawn for all the torment they had done to Him before. But the princes and priests and pharisees coveted more that their cursed purpose might now be fulfilled, for they louted to Him and mocked Him, that was and is very God Everlasting. And they worked His Death. For now He was brought again and unclothed of the purple and so stood naked before them and then leave was given to Him to clothe Him again. Abide here and behold and turn a little from His Godhead. Behold a poor man most shapely, most fair and most noble, most innocent and most lovely, all scourged and bespattered with blood, so that from the top of

His Head to the sole of His Foot was no whole place left. Behold Him gathering His clothes to Him that were cast about, with all manner of shamefastness, and clothing Him again as He had been the lowest of all and forsaken of God and deprived of all manner of help. Behold Him diligently, and be moved with pity and compassion. For now He gathereth one garment to Him and now another and again clotheth Him before them all. Turn again often to His Godhead and behold that great and incomprehensible Emperor's Majesty Incarnate bowing Himself meekly to the earth and again donning His clothes with reverence and shame as though He had been the most vile servant or man put under lordship and as a man that had been corrected for a great trespass, and chastised. Now behold Him diligently and conform thyself to His patience and have wonder at His meekness. . . . .

The Doings of Holy Saturday

And then our Lady entered into the House and Magdalen with her and her two sisters, and John kept the door and suffered no more to enter. And then he shut the door and our Lady looked about her and said, "My sweet Son where art Thou? for I see Thee not. O John where is my Son, O Magdalen where is my Father? O my well beloved sisters where is our Son, our Joy, our Sweetness?

For now the Light of our eyes is gone from us. Nor might we help Him in anything. All have forsaken Him and His Almighty Father would not help Him. O my sweet Son; this night Thou wast taken; in the morning-time scourged and beaten; at noon condemned; at mid-day crucified and at nones dead. O my Love, how bitter is this departing." And thus all this night unto the Saturday following they abode in that house and they sat alone beholding one another as fatherless and motherless children fulfilled with great torment. For sorrow, not speaking one to other, but having mind of things that were done before.

And then came one knocking at the door and then they all were afeared. And John looked who it was, and knew that it was Peter and let him in. And he came in sore ashamed, with much sighing and weeping. And then they all began to weep. And none might look to other for sorrow. And after that there came one and other of the other disciples weeping and sorrowing. And at the last they ceasing of weeping began to speak of our Lord. And Peter said, "I am ashamed and confounded in myself; I should not speak in your sight nor be seen before you for I forsook and denied my Lord that so much loved me." And on the same wise did others with smiting on their breasts and pouring out of tears and reproving themselves that they so

cowardly had left their good Master and Lord. And then said our Lady, "Our Good Master and Lord is gone away from us and we are left fatherless children. But I hope steadfastly that we shall soon have Him again. Remember that my Love was full meek and benign and gladly He shall forgive you all your trespasses and offences and blames. For by the Will of the Father the rudeness and fierceness of His enemies was so stronge against Him that ye might not help Him in any thing; and therefore be not afraid." Peter answered and said, "Truly my Lady it was so as thou sayest. For when I was with him in Caiaphas' Hall I saw so many about Him I was so afraid that I would not to have stayed nor I had no mind of the words that He had said to me, before till that He beheld me." And then Magdalen asked Him what that He had said to him. And he answered of the evening and told to her altogether; and other things that He had said before of His Passion and of His Supper. And then said our Lady, "I would hear of those things that were done and said of Him at His Supper." And Peter beckoned to John that he should tell. And John began and told altogether. So they talked each to other as well of these things as of others that our Lord Jesus had done before.

And so speaking of the words and deeds of Christ

they spent all that day. Oh how often on this day in telling of these deeds said our Lady, "Blessed be my Son Jesus." Therefore behold busily and have compassion; for they were put in great torment. For what do we see? The Lady of Heaven and Earth and the Princes of Churches and of all people and the Dukes of all the heavenly host abode and sat so closed in a little house, knowing not what they might do. But they comforted themselves with the words and deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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